

IMPACT STUDY

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

USER GUIDE | TOOLS

RESEARCH SUMMARY

KEY FINDINGS: Using a quasi-experimental research design, this research measured the effects of facilitated single-visit art museum programs on students in grades 4–6. We found that students who experience a facilitated single-visit program in an art museum are affected in four ways:¹

QUESTIONING: Students ask more complex questions about works of art.

MULTIPLE INTERPRETATIONS: Students are more accepting of multiple interpretations of a work of art.

PHYSICALITY OF ART: Students are more likely to think about art in terms of a work’s material properties.

EMOTIVE RECALL: Students experience greater emotive recall of the program.



¹ For a detailed description of these four ways and their implications, go to the [Summary Report & Discussion](#), p. 21-31.

CONDITIONS

What happens during a facilitated single-visit program in an art museum?

Observations indicate average conditions:

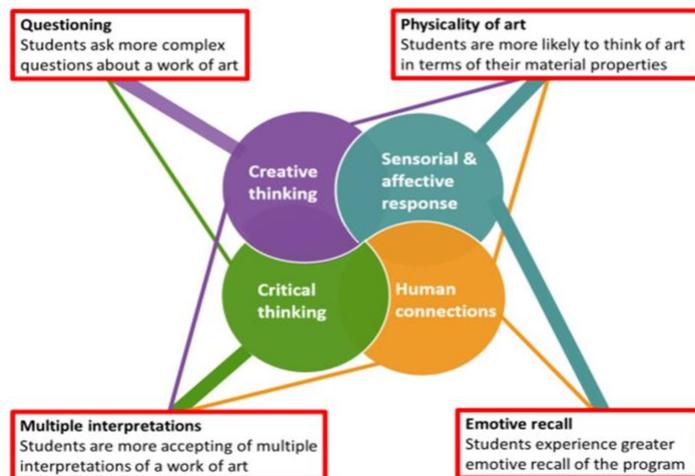
- 73-minute program
- Mostly facilitated by trained volunteer docents
- Student-to-facilitator ratio is 10:1 or less
- Includes stops at 7 original works of art
- Artwork is mostly representational (vs. abstract); largely 2D, some 3D & media

Observations show that pedagogy frequently supports students in:

- Interpreting
- Connecting observations to previous knowledge
- Recognizing multiple interpretations
- Questioning and investigating
- Experiencing captivation
- Connecting to human experience

RESULTS

What are the **results** of a facilitated single-visit art museum program on students in grades 4-6?



The above Conditions box indicates the observations conducted during the research study. The Results diagram shows the study's four key findings and the student capacities from which they originate. A close examination of the benefits for students who experienced a facilitated single-visit art museum program reveals the complexity inherent in students' relationship to the capacities, as depicted in the diagram and described in detail in the [Summary Report](#). Multiple, color-coded lines in the graphic show the relationship between teaching and learning during the program. The thicker lines represent the strongest links, and the thinner lines show that these findings link to multiple capacities.²

² The academic connections capacity is intentionally omitted from the Results graphic because we found no direct benefits in that area; however, we acknowledge there may be indirect benefits.

WHY?

RESEARCH QUESTION: What are the benefits of facilitated single-visit art museum programs, guided by inquiry-based pedagogies, for students in grades 4–6?

RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS: Though short in duration, facilitated single-visit art museum programs affect students in complex, multidimensional ways. There is not one direct effect; rather, there are potentially multiple, interrelated effects that are central to the education of young people.

WHO?

PARTNERS: National Art Education Association (NAEA) Museum Education Division, Association of Art Museum Directors (AAMD), and Randi Korn & Associates (RK&A)

FUNDING: Support provided by a National Leadership Grant from the [Institute of Museum and Library Services](#) (IMLS) and the [Samuel H. Kress Foundation](#)

MUSEUM PARTNERS: NAEA, AAMD, and RK&A selected six museums across the country based on data from the [field-wide survey](#) that was administered to art museums in 2015. The [selection criteria](#) dictated that the sample group would include one museum from each of the six geographic regions designated by the American Alliance of Museums. The museums also had to range in size, geographic location, demographic community, and use inquiry-based teaching approaches in their single-visit programs. [Final sites](#) selected were the following:

- Rhode Island School of Design Museum – Providence, Rhode Island
- Walters Art Museum – Baltimore, Maryland
- Orlando Museum of Art – Orlando, Florida
- Columbus Museum of Art – Columbus, Ohio
- Museum of Fine Arts, Houston – Houston, Texas
- Hammer Museum – Los Angeles, California

SCHOOL PARTNERS: Participating schools were recruited from the predominant public-school districts surrounding the six museum sites. A rigorous research review process was undertaken and permission had to be granted by each district’s superintendent and each school. Schools were also required to hold Title I status (at least 40% of students come from low-income families) and have less than 25% of students who were English language learners (since the study was administered in English). Ultimately, seven school districts, representing 180 grade 4–6 classrooms, participated among the six museum sites. The participating classes were general education, not art or other special subjects. This report or any related material does not identify the school districts or the schools by name in accordance with the study’s human subjects’ protection requirements.

Grade level selection was based on findings from the *Summary of Results Survey of Single-Visit K–12 Art Museum Programs* [Full Report](#) and RK&A firsthand observations of museum programs. Nationwide, single-visit art museum programs serve grades K–4 most frequently, followed by grades 5–8. We chose to limit the study to three grade levels to reduce the number of variables between students. In addition, the

students needed to be mature enough to engage the capacities we were investigating; therefore, we further limited the study to grades 4–6.³

WHAT?

WHAT THIS STUDY IS

This study takes a macro approach to facilitated single-visit art museum programs. From it, we can understand the effects these programs have on students in grades 4–6. Furthermore, it raises additional specific and targeted questions about facilitated single-visit programs.

WHAT THIS STUDY IS NOT

We prioritized generalizability. Thus, this study does not explore the effects of individual aspects of facilitated single-visit programs on students in grades 4–6. For instance, this study does not prescribe best practices for pedagogy, selection of art works, or other program specifics.

STUDENT CAPACITIES: Critical to this research is the framework developed for describing and theorizing the potential benefits of facilitated single-visit art museum programs to students. In line with recent research (visit [Literature Review](#)) and based on input from art museum educators about the purpose of their work, we chose to focus the research on five capacities: creative thinking, critical thinking, human connections, sensorial and affective responses, and academic connections.

METHODOLOGY: RK&A’s goal was to implement a methodologically rigorous research design to measure the effects of facilitated single-visit art museum programs on students. As shown in the following figure, RK&A used a quasi-experimental research design that included three study groups:

- **Treatment A:** Students received a single-visit program in a museum facilitated by a trained museum representative (volunteer docent or staff) in which they viewed and experienced original works of art.
- **Treatment B:** Students received a single-visit program in a school classroom facilitated by a trained museum representative (volunteer docent or staff) in which they viewed reproductions of works of art.
- **Control:** Students did not receive an art museum or classroom program.

Treatment B study group data were used to pinpoint differences between an inquiry-based program in a museum with original works of art and an inquiry-based program in a school classroom with reproductions of works of art.

³ For detailed information on the breakdown of students participating in the art museum programs, go to the [Appendix](#), pp. 7-9.

QUASI-EXPERIMENTAL RESEARCH DESIGN

STUDY GROUP	TREATMENT A museum program 	TREATMENT B classroom program 	CONTROL no program 
Program Intervention	Single-visit <u>museum</u> program facilitated by a trained docent or museum educator in which students view <u>original works of art</u>	Single-visit <u>school classroom</u> program facilitated by a trained docent or museum educator in which students view <u>reproductions of works of art</u>	None
Pre-measure	Student questionnaire	Student questionnaire	Student questionnaire
Program measure	Observation of program	Observation of program	N/A
Post-measure	Student questionnaire Student interview Teacher questionnaire Teacher interview Program facilitator interview	Student questionnaire Student interview Teacher questionnaire Teacher interview Program facilitator interview	Student questionnaire Student interview Teacher questionnaire Teacher interview

SAMPLE SIZE:

- RK&A data collectors observed 101 museum and classroom programs. During programs, observers took notes, writing down exactly what the trained museum representative (volunteer docent or staff) said and did during the program. The observer then completed a standardized [observation guide](#) within 24 hours of the program, providing ratings for the extent to which trained museum representatives (volunteer docents or staff) supported students in the five capacities.⁴
- A total of 4,134 pre- and post-program questionnaires were collected to explore any change in perceptions as a result of the museum or classroom program.
- RK&A conducted 627 interviews with students in all three study groups (Treatment A, Treatment B, and Control) after the program intervention.
- 92 teachers completed a post-program questionnaire. The questionnaire collected information about teaching practices and students’ exposure to cultural institutions.
- To further explore what teachers value about facilitated single-visit art museum programs, RK&A conducted interviews with 13 teachers.
- 19 trained museum representatives (volunteer docents or staff) participated in interviews. The primary purpose was to explore what trained museum representatives (volunteer docents or staff) value about single-visit art museum programs for students and challenges they encounter when facilitating them.

⁴ RK&A designed this [Training Protocol](#) for the observation guide.



No capacity can be mastered in such a short time, but positive impact is possible. Single-visit programs introduce students and educators to the range of skills and learning that occurs when students engage with original objects in a museum setting. Single-visit program design should consider ways to balance goals and outcomes based on the findings in the context of each capacity. Emphasis on sensorial and affective responses and academic connections may be underrepresented in single visits.

CONCLUSION:

Facilitated single-visit art museum programs, using inquiry-based pedagogies, provide a unique opportunity for students to engage with original works of art in a learning environment that is different from that of a school. Our research shows that student experiences with original works of art in an art museum and student experiences with reproductions in a school classroom produce statistically different results. The museum experience inspires students to look closely, and as they do, they question, investigate, share ideas, and discover personal connections. Facilitated single-visit art museum programs that use inquiry-based pedagogies also stimulate and foster students' creativity and curiosity. Practicing skills such as observation and questioning across a variety of learning situations are core educational goals, and, as this research shows, museums are venues that offer important learning and skill-development opportunities for students. Museum directors and educators can feel comfortable championing facilitated single-visit art museum programs by specifying the benefits measured in this study.