

***Training Tomorrow's Teachers: Art Museum Preservice Training Programs***  
**Presenter and Audience Responses to the Questions from the 2006 NAEA  
Conference Session**

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***What are key reasons (or rationale) for implementing a program for preservice teachers?***

ACM: Because the Amon Carter Museum is positioned in close proximity to five universities, it seemed unbelievable that we hadn't worked with preservice teachers prior to May 2004. I noticed two things that led directly to starting the Future Teacher Program—low numbers of teachers attending professional development programs at the museum and a struggle for current classroom teachers to incorporate the museum's resources into their curriculum. By expanding our definition of "teacher" to include preservice teachers, as well as administrators and homeschool educators, we gained a much larger audience for our programs, which now fill to capacity. In addition, we also noticed current classroom teachers routinely felt so overwhelmed with their responsibilities that they were hesitant to want to learn anything new, such as incorporating museum resources into their practice. By introducing preservice teachers to the museum's resources prior to their teaching careers, they have time to practice using the resources and feel secure, knowing they can turn to the Carter for help incorporating art into their curriculum. Another reason we implemented the program was because the museum added an education staff member dedicated entirely to instructional services.

Minneapolis Institute of Arts: Preservice teachers are perhaps the best audience for resource presentations and workshops. As students of education, they are preparing resources, procedures, and habits that will serve their classroom teaching. If we can impress upon them the value of our resources and programs while they are in training, they may be more likely to use them in the classroom.

College-level education courses repeat on a predictable schedule. This creates a set number of opportunities to present resources to a captive audience. It also sets the stage for an ongoing relationship. The resource presentation/workshop often becomes part of the curricula and creates the opportunity for repeat visits. In this way, it is easier to recruit participants than it would be to create an opportunity for inservice teachers. I have formed ongoing relationships with five colleges of teacher education in Minnesota. This guarantees ten workshops per year with an average of twenty-five participants per workshop. These numbers are in addition to workshops for other schools of teacher education and inservice teachers.

Smart Museum of Art: This is not a new practice in the field, though traditionally, art museum training for preservice teachers has focused more on training fine arts teachers in art history content. For many of us in museums, we run programs for preservice educators because of the unique opportunity to:

- train preservice teachers to use museum resources *before they enter the classroom*;
- establish relationships with educators early on in their teaching career, hopefully making them more comfortable with museums and art;

- support greater goals for teacher professional development. For the Smart, our work with university students is a key component of our mission, thus the collaboration with the UTEP (University of Chicago Urban Teacher Education) program was a logical extension.

We are also motivated by

- a belief/value that all teachers should have some experience with and knowledge of art and how it relates to learning;
- the value of the arts in education;
- the potential for rich collaborations between educators and museums.

Audience: In some school districts, object-based learning is still foreign to teachers. Art can be the catalyst and energizer when introducing concepts in core disciplines.

### ***What are the challenges associated with art museum preservice training?***

ACM: The biggest challenge I've found is to move preservice teachers from simply being familiar with the Carter's resources to actually implementing them in their curriculum. A one-shot, two-hour program simply isn't enough training to show teachers how they can easily use our resources. The first program makes them familiar, while additional programs would allow them to put the resources into practice. We're attempting to overcome this challenge by partnering with at least one university to develop a multiple-visit program where students attend the museum with different classes once each semester. By the time they graduate, they would have attended four training sessions at the Carter. Smaller challenges include encouraging professors from Dallas schools (approximately thirty miles away) to participate in the program; getting teachers who have had presentations at their schools to make the effort to visit the museum when their class schedules do permit; grabbing the attention of juniors, who may not be as attentive because they are so far removed from teaching; managing the time spent after regular work hours to conduct off-site programs; getting students to complete evaluations after the program; and losing preservice teachers off our e-mail database if they only provide us with their school e-mail address.

Minneapolis Institute of Arts: The greatest challenge is that these workshops often take instructional time away from the usual instructor/professor. I have encountered Department Heads and Deans that would not authorize a workshop because of this. One successful solution is to offer the workshop as an extracurricular activity through a student group, such as an honors society.

Additional challenges include funding for instructional materials and travel expenses. Facilitating these workshops is part of my job. I do not have to collect fees for my time, but I do have to find a way to cover my expenditures. I have encountered some resistance from colleges in covering these costs since the grant period ended.

The mindset of the students can often be a challenge. Most are focused on getting through the degree or certification program and not on resources that will help them succeed in the classroom. As with most learning opportunities, making the content immediately useful to the students will increase the likelihood for retention and transfer. I work with the instructor or professor to customize the content of the workshop to meet the students' current needs and to insure that the use of the Web site is part of a class assignment. I have been able to accomplish this at most sites.

Smart Museum of Art: There is a challenge of working with preservice teacher *because* they are themselves still students and are not yet in a classroom of their own. It is interesting that this becomes a

challenge because, going into these sessions, we considered it a real advantage to work with students.

Yet for both years of implementation, we have encountered difficulties because of this. Here are a few of the specific challenges:

- unclear expectations set forth by higher ed staff – is this for fun or is it as serious as their other courses? This affects the effort students put into our assignments, even though we give very little “work” outside of our actual sessions;
- at times, students’ attitudes are a barrier, e.g. acting tired, bored, even skeptical or dismissive of information, visible lack of interest at times (not all do this; it varies among the students and as sessions go on);
- limited, even narrow, understanding of and/or personal engagement with art; limited/restrained understanding or willingness to make connections between the arts and learning;
- somewhat limited enthusiasm about teaching in general; at times, not asking good questions or fully participating (especially in contrast with our very enthusiastic, energetic bunch of student docents—same ages and all from University of Chicago).

Given that we have received only positive feedback from higher ed staff and students, we are left with questions: what can we do to make sessions more immediately relevant to students? How could we collaborate with other instructors to make better connections with students’ other arenas of learning? Should this be mandatory or an optional program for interested students (though this feels “wrong” given our goals and beliefs)? How can we communicate our concerns with higher ed staff?

Other challenges:

- Time for enough depth
- Staff time to organize and facilitate
- Scheduling! (cooperation from higher ed staff)
- Funding
- Direct communication with the students (via higher ed staff)
- Assessment

***What are the best ways to connect with university education departments and recruit program participants? How do we sustain these relationships?***

ACM: I first connected with university education departments by visiting university and college Web sites and making lists of contact information for all professors on their staff, looking at the semester’s class schedules, and particularly targeting professors who would be teaching classes that best fit the Carter’s program. I then sent each professor a custom-tailored e-mail, indicating the class I thought the program would best fit with (no mass e-mails!) and what the Carter could offer. I also sent e-mails about the program to all education faculty administrators. Some teachers signed-up simply because of my e-mail and subsequent phone conversations with them. Several deans invited me to make presentations about the program to their entire faculty, which resulted in securing programs. After each program with a new professor, I always send a hand-written thank-you note. After a semester of the program, it was featured in *Program*, the Carter’s members’ magazine. Quotes from and photographs of participating professors and students were used, so I mailed each participating professor a copy of the magazine, as well as copies to all non-participating schools, which secured another school’s participation.

I have sustained these relationships by providing consistent, quality programs that professors now contact me every semester to participate in. I have gained new professors because of word-of-mouth. I

continue to present at education faculty meetings to evaluate and improve the program, and I've worked with education faculty to provide non-paid internships for graduate students in education that had learned about us by participating in the program. Whenever we're having a special educator program, I send e-mails to participating professors, encouraging them to share it with their students and colleagues.

I have also developed programs specifically for professors, such as University Night at the Carter. This program is a free special reception where professors can network with each other, attend a special tour of a featured exhibition, and attend a short program by curators and education staff. Professors who don't participate in the Future Teacher Program are invited, and it has been proven to strengthen the Carter's relationship with area universities and colleges. We also have a Teacher Advisory Committee, a five-member committee that helps advise the Carter on its teacher and student programs, and one of the professors who routinely participates was asked to serve on the committee.

Minneapolis Institute of Arts: Check to see if your state has an association for colleges of teacher education. Minnesota has MACTE, the Minnesota Association of Colleges of Teacher Education. They have a newsletter and Web site that is a good way to get the word out. Their Web site was a great place to find addresses for schools with teacher education programs. I went to the Web site of each school of teacher education in Minnesota. I looked for contact information for teachers of art education, technology, and general methods. I also looked up the contact information for department heads and deans. I used a variety of communication techniques, which included postcard mailing, letters, e-mails, and phone calls, to obtain an invitation to present to students.

I found that once I had an opportunity to work with the instructor and his or her students it was easy to sustain the relationship. Using e-mail to keep in touch proved to be the best means of communication. Continuing to offer quality instruction and resources at little or no cost to the college increased the sustainability of these relationships.

#### Smart Museum of Art:

- University museum—great connection and potential (though somewhat deceptively simple; just because we can, doesn't mean we should do a program unless it is valuable for all)
- Sustainability—Must be valued as key component of teacher training; dialogue with higher ed staff, collaboration if possible, etc.

Audience: Work with universities and higher education departments on other collaborative projects. Provide participating professors with ideas for application of what the students learn. Meet with higher ed staff to find out what other disciplines are teaching, and try to connect programs to these topics.

#### ***Given the array of museum resources and objectives of trainings, what does success look like for museums, education faculty, and preservice students?***

ACM: When I first developed this program, I measured success by the number of schools, professors, and preservice teachers that participated. However, now that the program is established, I've changed my thinking. Success now means getting preservice teachers to have quality learning experiences while at the museum and actually implement one or more of our resources in their teaching practice. These resources include the Carter's tours, classroom videoconferencing programs, Teaching Resource Center (TRC), library, online teaching guides, teacher workshops, and digital images from our collection. Starting in January 2006, I began sending evaluations to preservice teachers to track their experiences at the program, and they will continue to be sent evaluations for the next few years as they begin teaching. Hopefully, this research will paint a truer picture of how successful this program is and will better guide

us on how to make it more successful. I have also felt this program is a success because preservice teachers already check-out materials from the TRC and attend workshops, and I hear stories from their professors about how they're using the Carter's images in classroom presentations.

Minneapolis Institute of Arts: Primarily, success is measured in numbers. How many preservice teachers participated in the program over the fiscal year is the main indicator of success. We have been able to maintain about 500 participants in the ArtsConnectEd teacher-training program. After a period of time when there was a break in outreach activity for ArtsConnectEd we saw a jump in user sessions after the outreach program was renewed. A correlation can be made between increased program participants and the number of user sessions on ArtsConnectEd.

Smart Museum of Art:

- Thus far, success has been determined by informal feedback from participants and higher ed staff; we are going to set up an online evaluate form this year to collect better data on the actual sessions (Numbers as an indicator aren't a factor for us because we only collaborate with the small class of UTEP students.);
- Long-term plan for assessment is my big question—how to measure if/what/how students use what they've learned through our program in their future classrooms in terms of art knowledge or collaborating with other institutions; is this important enough to put the time and energy into, especially given the challenges explained above?

Audience: Consider using paper surveys at the end of training sessions. Meaningful learning environments could be measured by assignments done in their college courses. A collection of assignments on a CD-ROM could be given to participating professors.