

ASIAN ART MUSEUM - CHONG-MOON LEE CENTER FOR ASIAN ART AND CULTURE

Bridge Program Evaluation

Phase 1 Baseline Report | March 2010

This report was a collaboration between **Dana Powell Russell, Ed.D.**, *Independent Evaluation Consultant*, and the **Institute for Learning Innovation**.

*Study Commissioned by the Asian Art Museum — Chong-Moon Lee Center for Asian Art and Culture
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Executive Summary

About the Bridge Program

The Asian Art Museum of San Francisco received a major grant from the Bank of America Charitable Foundation to launch its new Bridge Program, a series of initiatives to update and expand the museum's educational resources and programs with an emphasis on K-12 teacher and school programs, new outreach programs to teens in the local community, and an expanded website. The museum seeks to position itself as a major resource for teaching about Asia. This study is the first step in defining the course of action needed to fulfill this vision. The Bridge Program will be implemented over a 4-1/2 year period, and aims to serve thousands of local, regional, statewide, and national stakeholders in the arts, education, and Asian Studies communities.

Rationale

As the global impact of Asia in the 21st century continues to grow, new resources are needed to help teachers provide quality education about Asia in the nation's schools. Yet, due to lack of funding, instructional materials and up-to-date professional development opportunities, teachers often have little support and few resources to enrich their curriculum. In fact, a study published by New York's Asia Society entitled *Asia in the Schools: Preparing Young Americans for Today's Interconnected World* (2001), revealed that although many schools incorporate Asia into their curriculum, instructional materials on Asia "is outdated and superficial or, even worse, distorted and inaccurate" (2001:7). The study also found that although teachers often strive to incorporate teaching about Asia into their curriculum, "they must do so without adequate background [information]" and there are few professional development opportunities to update and enhance their knowledge (National Commission on Asia in the Schools, 2001:7). That said, museums—having increasingly positioned themselves as educational resources—have the potential to fill the gaps left by the inadequate resources on Asia in schools throughout the nation. The Asian Art Museum seeks to spearhead efforts to fill these gaps through its Bridge Program.

Purpose of the Study

The Asian Art Museum hired two independent evaluators to design the online survey and facilitate focus groups to gauge teacher needs for curriculum and programs on Asian art and culture, and to discover how the Asian Art Museum's current materials and programs are perceived and used by the K-12 community. The study will inform the museum on how it can strengthen the reach, usability, and impact of its educational programs and resources through its Bridge Program. Interim and summative data will also be collected as the Bridge Program unfolds, with the intent of measuring progress against the baseline results and toward program goals and objectives.

Participants

The target audience for this study were K-12 teachers and administrators. Approximately half of the participants had participated in a program at the Asian Art Museum and were from the museum's established mailing list, while the other 50% were from the mailing lists of local, regional, state, and national partner organizations in the fields of Asian Studies, History/Social Sciences, the Visual Arts, and K-12 education. The majority of participants taught in a public or private school in the Greater Bay Area, with more than one-third teaching in San Francisco City and County and 9% taught in another state. Participants were most likely to teach secondary school, and the most common subject areas taught were History/Social Science and English/Language Arts. This was also a very experienced group of teachers; the majority had been teaching 10 or more years. Twenty-three K-12 teachers participated in the focus groups, of whom 22 had completed the online survey.

Methods

This mixed-methods cross-sectional study collected data through an online survey and three focus groups. The Asian Art Museum chose the former method to gather quantitative information and the latter to gain qualitative information in order to establish an expansive breadth of baseline data for use in follow-up studies. The Institute for Learning Innovation (ILI) designed the online survey instrument and developed the online survey questions in collaboration with the Asian Art Museum's education department staff. Focus groups were conducted by Dana Powell, Ed.D., Independent Evaluation Consultant, in order to elicit the in-depth explanations from teachers that could not be derived from the online survey instrument.

Online Survey. Invitations to complete the online survey were sent via standard mail and email to the Asian Art Museum's established mailing list, and an email invitation was sent via local, regional, state, and national partner organizations in the fields of Asian Studies, History/Social Sciences, the Visual Arts, and K-12 education. The intent was to achieve a significant number of respondents from the San Francisco Bay Area, while also gleaning input from interested educators and potential new audiences state and nationwide. Invitations were reportedly sent to a total of 22,684 individuals. A total of 420 teachers completed the online survey for an overall response rate of less than 1%. The low percentage could have been due, in part, to the number of individuals reported by the partner organizations, as the individuals reported may have represented the number of people on their email lists rather than the number of people who received the email. Another possible explanation is that a high number of distribution partner emails were sent out to a broad audience, and many recipients did not complete the survey since it did not appear applicable to their needs or interests. Indeed, response rates for the museum's established mailing list was 5% for standard mail and 27% for email, which is significantly higher than the response rate of less than 1% for the distribution partners. The significant difference in response rates could have been due to the fact that people on the Asian Art Museum's established mailing list tend to be more invested in the museum's programs and resources, and therefore more likely to respond. Appendix D in the full report lists the partner organizations who participated in the dissemination of the online survey invitation. See Appendices A - C for the invitations sent, and see Appendix E to view the questions from the online survey.

Focus Groups. Focus groups were conducted for Elementary (K-5), Secondary (6-12), and Prospective (K-12) users of the Asian Art Museum's education resources and programs for teachers, for a total of three focus group sessions. These sessions were designed to address aspects of the research questions that were not easily addressed via the online survey, and to elicit more elaborate responses. The three 2-hour focus groups were conducted on Saturday, March 28, 2009, at the Asian Art Museum, and participants received resource materials as a thank you gift for their participation. The focus groups were documented in both written and audio formats, and the resulting data was analyzed using

standard content analysis methods. These data and analyses were synthesized with the online survey results for the purposes of interpretation and the formation of conclusions and recommendations in this report.

Main Findings

In the online survey, we hoped to gain a broad understanding of the following: 1) how teachers sought and used supplementary materials, 2) whether and how they use visual arts in their teaching, 3) whether and how they teach about Asia, 4) whether and how they have participated in Asian Art Museum programs and/or used its materials, and 5) how materials might be developed in the future to better meet these teachers' needs. We have outlined the main findings from both survey instruments by the following categories, which parallel the structure of how we asked teachers for their feedback in the online survey (the entire survey and full report are available at: www.asianart.org/researchpapers.htm):

- Supplementary Teaching Materials in the Classroom
- Visual Arts Materials in the Classroom
- Teaching About Asia in the Classroom
- Materials from the Asian Art Museum
- Program Participation at the Asian Art Museum
- Making Teacher Materials More Useful

Supplementary Teaching Materials in the Classroom. Teachers were likely to say that, regardless of the content, whether from a museum or other education institution, they preferred to receive suggested classroom activities and background information for specific topics. Following this, teachers requested comprehensive units. They also mentioned that they were much more likely to modify the materials rather than use them "as is." In looking for materials, teachers said the internet was the most common method for finding information, although they also consulted with other teachers for resource recommendations. Once they find the materials, they use a combination of contacting the source directly and by going online; there is a slight preference toward contacting the source directly, with email being the most common of all the contact methods.

Visual Arts Materials in the Classroom. Educators surveyed use and teach Visual Arts in a more integrated manner in the classroom rather than as a stand-alone. They are most likely to get the materials from the internet, followed by print publications, teachers/colleagues, and from museums. They use these Visual Arts materials for a variety of classes, including History/Social Science, English/Language Arts and the Visual Arts. While online was a trend in identifying, requesting and acquiring materials, there was a strong preference for receiving both online and physical materials. The most common online materials being used are downloadable .pdf files, searchable image databases and online video clips.

Teaching about Asia in the Classroom. The majority of teachers cover content about Asian art, history or culture in areas related to History/Social Sciences, Visual Arts and English/Language Arts. Teachers were more comfortable teaching about East Asia (China, Korea, and Japan) or about Asia in general, compared to other regions of Asia. Only a little more than a quarter felt strongly that the materials about Asia they were currently using in the classroom were useful. This seems to suggest that the Asian Art Museum can fill this gap by providing specific materials.

Materials from the Asian Art Museum. In this group, 38% had used the Asian Art Museum's materials in their classrooms. Of this group the large majority had heard about the materials as a result of participating in an Asian Art

Museum program, suggesting that there may be room to raise awareness of museum's educator materials through other avenues. The various educator resource packets were the resource they were most likely to have used. Across all of the K-12 materials produced by the museum, teachers were most likely to have been using teacher packets for seven or more years. They saw these materials as being most useful for providing accurate information, opportunities for personal and professional growth, and aligning with the state of California content standards. For those who had not used the materials the main reason was that they simply weren't aware of the materials, and suggested email as the best means for communicating with them about the materials. When given a list of specific topics to receive more information, the two most chosen were East Asia and Multiculturalism.

Program Participation at the Asian Art Museum. Sixty percent of the teachers had participated in one of five specific Asian Art Museum school and teacher programs (docent-led school tour, storytelling school tour, self-guided school tour, teacher workshop, and adult program). By far the main reason for not having participated in at least one of these programs was not being aware of them. Greater awareness, in addition to cost offset and greater availability, were seen as the factors that would encourage higher participation in the on-site programs. Teachers who had participated in the programs tended to have done so for many years and rated the experience as very positive. Suggestions for improving the program were to have more content variety, additional program formats and more pre- and post-program support for the teachers.

Making Teacher Materials About Asia More Useful. Teachers reported that they needed more instructional support to teach about Asia. When looking specifically at the materials about Asian art, history and culture, they identified a need for more content types/format, support for use, content depth, age-appropriate information, classroom-ready materials and more content in general. Asked specifically about improving the Asian Art Museum's teacher materials, suggestions included having more content (background information), increasing awareness, making it more appropriate to their grade level, and easier to access.

Conclusions and Recommendations

This research resulted in a great deal of detailed information, which museum staff will be utilizing in revising existing programs and materials and planning future ones. All the detailed conclusions and recommendations may be viewed in the full report available at: www.asianart.org/researchpapers.htm

In broad strokes the following three key findings will direct the museum in implementation of the Bridge Project:

1. Teachers are asking for more resources on new topics and in a range of formats. Seventy-five percent of the teachers in our sample reported that they teach about Asia, but only 32% of these felt they had adequate resources. In addition, there is low awareness of Asian Art Museum materials--only 38% of teachers in this study had used them.
 - Museum staff will be developing new resources with teacher preferences in mind and we will incorporate teacher feedback at key points in the development of new content to ensure relevance and to stay abreast of shifting requirements and needs.
 - The museum must do more outreach and promotion of its resources.
2. Teachers use the Internet in their search for supplementary materials, but also continue to have a preference for materials in print form.

- The museum is currently working on developing a searchable online database for its resources so that teachers may more easily find and download out content.
 - Future curriculum units will be developed for both online and print production.
3. Teachers desire and need more professional development opportunities to enhance and refresh their content knowledge and learn about new content sources and ways to use them.
- The museum will ramp up its programming focusing on teachers to:
 - increase the number of in-service training opportunities at the museum and partner institutions
 - provide more networking opportunities for teachers at the museum and in online communities

Of use to anyone creating supplementary content for teachers were the following findings:

- **Visual Arts in the classroom:** We found that our survey respondents use Visual Arts in a more integrated manner than as a subject in and of itself. This is partly a function of our sample drawn largely from teachers already using Asian Art Museum materials, many of whom are History/Social Science teachers, but may also stem from a lack of familiarity across the board with Asian art versus Western art. There are opportunities for all art museums to design multidisciplinary resources for teachers of a range of subjects.
- **Time crunch to adapt materials:** Teachers in the focus group reported that they have little time to adapt materials beyond their textbook, suggesting the need to create museum materials with tiered information that can be easily modified by teachers.
- **Materials for students:** Teachers reported a desire for quality materials that would be accessible not only to them but to their students, suggesting that materials be developed with younger audiences in mind.
- **Correlation between training and adoption of materials:** The majority or 75% of teachers who reported using Asian Art Museum materials (representing 38% of all survey respondents) said that they first heard about them by participating in a program at the museum. This suggests a strong correlation between professional development and the adoption of supplementary materials, and also suggests the need to reach out to junior teachers and pre-service teacher training programs.

In addition to the detailed information about teacher needs and preferences, this study has another benefit for the museum. It has elevated awareness amongst teachers who received and participated in the survey. Teachers were asked to opt in to receive updates from the museum. We now have an up-to-date and expanded database of teachers, who have expressed interested in receiving museum updates. From this list we have invited teachers to participate in an advisory group to share their insights with museum staff on a project by project basis. With a greater sense of teacher needs and desires as divulged in this research, the Asian Art Museum is better positioned to serve the teaching community with its Bridge Project initiatives.

End of Executive Summary

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