INTERPRETERS, DOCENTS AND EDUCATORS:
WAYS OF KNOWING, WAYS OF TEACHING
IN
A HISTORY MUSEUM, AN ART GALLERY, AND A NATURE CENTRE

by

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A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
Department of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning
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Doctor of Philosophy
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Abstract
Museums have increasingly recognized the need to encourage museum visitors to make their own decisions, to become their own interpreters of what the institution has to offer. Some contend that the aim of museum education is to enable museum visitors not only to learn better on their own but also to teach one another within a community of learners. Yet little is known about museum teaching as it is currently practised. Few have considered what it means to teach in the museum or the significance that teaching has for teachers themselves.

This dissertation is about museum teachers (docents, interpreters, and gallery educators) and their ways of knowing and teaching. It is an interpretive inquiry that documents and analyzes the nature and experience of teaching within the museum setting from the perspective of the teacher. Eight teachers from three settings, a community history museum, an art gallery, and a nature centre, participated in the study. Qualitative research methods of participant-observation, conversational interview, and reflective practice were employed.

The research suggests that face-to-face teaching in a museum setting requires knowledge of the discipline base of the institution as well as of the nature of museums. Although instructional strategies are important, equally significant are the skills of comprehension and reflection by which museum teachers transform and combine these dual subject matters through pedagogical reasoning. A key factor in this process of reasoning is the comprehension of purposes for learning and teaching. Museum teachers conceptualize learning in the museum as a pleasurable lifelong process and, in response, most often provide acts of teaching that support and strengthen the learner’s own attempts to learn.
However, they remain “on call” to teach at an intellectual level that aims to produce in the learner an awareness of the intent of the teaching and the reasons why the subject is taught. This understanding of the complexity of teaching is seen by museum teachers to emerge from a combination of prior knowledge and situated, on-site teaching experience rather than from the orientation and continuing professional education provided to them by the museum.
Acknowledgements

Above all I thank the eight people who participated with me in this study. The assurance of anonymity allows me to use only their pseudonyms but I acknowledge the tremendous contribution made to this study by the teacher-participants known herein as Alice, Bern, Dwight, Gord, Helen, Jennifer, Joan, and Walt. Their faith in my ability to tell their stories and their trust that I would be fair in my analysis of their work sustained me through a lengthy process. I simply couldn't have written this without them. And so it is with a profound sense of loss that I note the untimely death of Jennifer in the latter stages of the work. She is sorely missed as both a friend and a colleague.

Second, I offer thanks to the members of my thesis committee. David Booth raised for me provocative questions regarding the relationship between arts education and museums. Alan Thomas helped me to place teaching within the broader domains of learning and education and to understand the implications of each for museum practice. Barbara Soren guided me in linking museum education theory to practice and by her own example demonstrated that it could be done.

I reserve a note of special appreciation for my supervisor, Brent Kilbourn. Working with Brent has been a true conversation of instruction. His constant support, genuine questioning, and gentle prodding aided immeasurably my conceptualization of knowing and teaching in museums.

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PART I
BACKGROUND

INTRODUCTION AND INITIAL PROBLEM STATEMENT

This thesis is about museum teachers and their ways of knowing and teaching. It is an interpretive inquiry that documents and analyzes the nature and experience of teaching within the museum setting from the perspective of the teacher.

The role and function of the museum in society has continually changed and evolved since its inception in the eighteenth century. But never has this been more apparent than in the first quarter of the twenty-first century when the museum has emerged as an institution fraught with controversy and struggling to define itself. As those who work in museums grapple with issues of money, power, and control, they have increasingly recognized the need to encourage museum visitors to make their own decisions, to become their own interpreters of what the institution has to offer. Some contend that the aim of museum education is not only to enable museum visitors to learn better on their own, but also to teach others within a community of learners. Yet little is known about museum teaching as it is currently practised. Few have considered what it means to teach in the museum or the significance that teaching has for teachers themselves. Through this study I gain a better understanding of how the interaction among museum teachers, their experience, and the context in which they practise gives rise to their knowing how to teach. In particular, I explore the understandings which museum teachers use to reason their way through and enact a complete act of pedagogy. The inquiry goes beyond the identification of competencies in order to address the complexity of teaching within the museum setting.

Before continuing, let me better define what I mean by museum and teacher. When using the term museum I refer to a broad range of institutions including "art, history, and
natural history museums; science centres; historic homes; living history farms and forts; aquariums; zoos; arboretums; botanical gardens; and nature centres” (Falk and Dierking 2000, xi). The International Council of Museums (ICOM) defines a museum as a “non-profit-making, permanent institution in the service of society and its development, and open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits, for purposes of study, education and enjoyment, material evidence of people and their environment” (Anderson 1997, xii). Likewise, the Canadian Museums Association defines a museum as:

A non-profit, permanent establishment, exempt from federal and provincial income taxes, open to the public at regular hours and administered in the public interest for the purpose of collecting and preserving, studying, interpreting, assembling and exhibiting to the public for its instruction and enjoyment, objects and specimens of cultural value, including artistic, scientific (whether animate or inanimate), historical and technological material. (CMA 2001)

Furthermore, while I acknowledge that many types of teachers and many forms of teaching occur within the museum setting, for the purposes of this study I have chosen to use the term museum teachers when referring generically to those who teach face-to-face programs in museum settings as defined above. This differentiates them from the broader group of museum educators who are also responsible for other aspects of museum education such as program and exhibition development, outreach, and new technologies. Although museum teachers might be presumed to be a subset of this larger group of museum educators, in practice they are considered to be a distinct class, as in the phrase “museum educators and docents” (Glaser and Zenetou 1994, xv). When referring to the teacher-participants in this study I use the titles by which they refer to themselves at their own sites, that is docent, gallery educator, or interpreter. The framework for their work is the guided tour or program—a structured or semi-structured activity with an educational intent designed by the teacher or an educational coordinator for the museum visitor(s) and which focuses upon the museum’s collection. But, in spite of the public’s familiarity with this form of teaching, little is actually known about the guided tour or the “tour guide.”
What do museum teachers know? How do museum teachers believe they know how to teach? What reasoning lies behind their acts of pedagogy?

Over a year-long period I worked with eight experienced museum teachers while they engaged in and reflected upon their teaching practice as expressed through the medium of guided tours and programs. In order to explore the domain of subject matter as it relates to museum teaching, I drew participants from three museums with different disciplinary bases: an art gallery, a nature centre, and a history museum. I followed and recorded tours and engaged with the teacher-participants in personal reflection on their observed practice and the ways in which they frame and reframe problems encountered through their teaching practice in the museum. My interpretations were also informed and shaped by my own past experience as a museum teacher.

SIGNIFICANCE OF MY INQUIRY

The significance of this study lies first in its acknowledgement of the role of teaching in the museum. An appreciation of the complex professional knowledge formed by the teacher in the undertaking of his or her work within the museum will contribute to the overall study of learning in the museum. By studying the understandings and skills of museum teachers I identify the importance of their teaching practice to the achievement of their own learning goals, not only as teachers but also as museum learners. Ultimately, a firmer grasp on what it means to teach in the museum will enable educators to better share with museum visitors how to use the museum and its contents in order to achieve the personal learning goals of the visitor.

Secondly, my analysis of museum teaching advances the development of a curriculum of training and continuing professional development for museum educators. While there exists a growing literature of prescriptive methods regarding the training of both paid and unpaid museum educators, there has been little published on the more elusive "artistry" of live teaching. If museum teachers are to help visitors both to learn and to teach
one another, then there is a pressing need within the museum community itself to recognize the complexity of the tasks involved in teaching and the consequent implications such recognition has for training. This research contributes to the general understanding of new models of professional education in the reflective practice mode which will be relevant to other jobs and functions in the museum.

Finally, this study helps to promote an understanding of teaching beyond its connotation as a phenomenon of schooling. Such analysis provides a common framework to allow for further analysis of educational encounters at several levels: (1) among similar non-school settings as, for instance, between one museum and another, (2) among different types of non-school settings such as museums, homes, or outdoor environments, and (3) between non-school and school settings. This kind of interaction benefits both non-school and school settings by recognizing and helping to define what is unique about teaching and the enhancement of learning in museums and other non-school settings.

The study has been divided into three parts:

In Part One (Chapters One, Two, and Three) I present the background to these issues within a curricular framework and review the recent research on museum teaching. I locate this study within that research and argue for the significance of the work proposed. Chapter Three focuses on the methodology of the study.

In Part Two (Chapters Four, Five, Six, and Seven) I present the data collected. Chapter Four is an introduction to the teacher-participants and the sites at which they work. In Chapters Five, Six, and Seven I examine in detail the pedagogical reasoning of the eight teacher-participants, organized site by site.

In Part Three (Chapters Eight, Nine, and Ten) I proceed with presentation and analysis of the data pertaining to the knowledge bases of the teacher-participants and conclude with my reflections on the findings of the study and the implications these may have for future research.
CHAPTER ONE

THE MUSEUM CURRICULUM

In this Chapter I explore the concept of the museum curriculum and the meaning that the four "commonplaces" (Schwab 1978)—subject matter, milieu, learners and learning, and teachers and teaching—have for the docent, interpreter, and gallery educator, beginning with an explication of my personal orientation to the questions of the study. In Chapter Two I concentrate on concepts of teachers and teaching in the museum, gallery, and nature centre, review prior research on teaching in these settings, and conclude with a model for investigating teacher’s ways of knowing and teaching.

PERSONAL ORIENTATION

The origins of this study emerge from my own experience as the coordinator of a course in the School of Continuing Studies, University of Toronto, from 1991 to 1995. Originally entitled “Speaking of Culture: Introduction to Docent Training” (1991–92), the course was subsequently retitled “Guiding Tours in Our Galleries, Museums and Parks” (1992–95). The title change reflected the broadening of the primary audience for the course from those interested in becoming docents in an art gallery (specifically at the Art Gallery of Ontario) to potential docents/interpreters/tour guides interested in the interpretation of collections/exhibits in museums, galleries, and parks (course outline, 1992). This course has been presented as one of five “exemplary programmes” for museum volunteers in Canada and the US (Goodlad and McIvor 1998). The authors of this study were impressed with the underlying rationale of the course: “training for people to act as effective museum
interpreters is itself a valuable form of education . . . ” (p. 52). In developing the course, I supported what I termed an andragogical theory of learning, “namely, that students [in the course] should learn how to learn from peers, professionals and other human and material resources as well as working with [course] teachers; students should thus be more involved with the entire teaching and learning process” (p. 54). The objectives of the course stated that participants would, over ten morning meetings, become able to:

1. identify the range and functions of the cultural institution, the roles of staff (paid/unpaid), and of professional organisations as well as sources of further research and professional development;
2. discuss the guiding principles, role and function of the docent/interpreter, past, present and future, and relate these to their personal goals and objectives as a docent/interpreter;
3. develop competence in public speaking and presentation skills and relate them to the interpretation of collections/exhibitions;
4. identify components of a tour or activity;
5. identify the primary audiences of the cultural institution, their characteristics and learning needs;
6. practise approaches to object-based learning and compare and contrast this method with other methods of learning within the cultural setting;
7. design and present a brief presentation applying the basic principles and/or skills of research, speaking, and object learning;
8. develop skills of constructive evaluation and apply these to tours of self and others;
9. build self-esteem and confidence;
10. have fun! (p. 55)

Thus I became responsible for the development and implementation of a curriculum that identified and refined generic skills applicable to touring in museums, galleries, and parks. I assumed that, while the content of the tours would differ, the method and skills required to conduct the tours and programs would be the same. As a trainer in museum education and interpretation, I became involved not only with the development of orientation and professional development in several associations of museum workers but also with similar endeavours at institutions as diverse as the Art Gallery of Ontario and the then Toronto Historical Board.

Until recently, most training and development of educational and interpretive staff was specific to the type of institution, for example, art gallery, historic site, or natural setting (Gilman 1984; Tilden 1967; Alderson and Low 1976; Newsom and Silver 1978;

This was in keeping with an earlier conception that emphasized the differences rather than the commonalities among traditional museums, galleries, and nature centres. For example, Burcaw (1975) maintains that in the United States an art gallery emphasizes the display of works of art, regardless of ownership, whereas in an art museum the emphasis is on the ownership and preservation of the collection (p. 6–7). Similarly, in Burcaw’s estimation, the essential distinction between a center and a museum is that the centre exists to make possible entertaining activity; a museum exists to make important educational or aesthetic use of the collection (p. 9). On the whole, Canadians have tended to be much less precise in their descriptions; using Burcaw’s categorization the Art Gallery of Ontario should properly be called the Art Museum of Ontario because the emphasis is on the collection and preservation of artworks rather than simply their display. However, as discussed in the introduction to Part One, the term museum now in common use refers to a broad range of institutions, including “art, history, and natural history museums; science centres; historic homes; living history farms and forts; aquariums; zoos; arboretums; botanical gardens; and nature centres” (Falk and Dierking 2000, xi). As the definition of a museum has become more inclusive, so too has the notion of education within these settings. Following this broader definition of museum, the concept of museum education has expanded to include each of these settings. For example, The Good Guide (Grinder and McCoy 1989) is intended to be a “sourcebook for ... volunteer and staff tour guides and interpreters ... from historical sites to such public institutions as museums, national parks, and zoos” (p. xiii). The Professional Guide (Pond 1993) is aimed at the commercial tour guide but considered to be of interest to interpreters and docents in the public sector (p. viii). Despite the specificity of its title The Docent Educator is a periodical aimed at “volunteers and staff educators teaching within museums, historic sites, gardens, parks, zoos and classrooms” (Gartenhaus 2000, 3).
Curriculum developed for university-level courses in museum education tends also to address these various institutions under the one title of museum. As an illustration, my own philosophy of museum education is grounded in my experiences as a student in the Master of Arts in Teaching—Museum Education at The George Washington University (GWU) in Washington, DC At the time of my residence (1980–81), the basic characteristics of the GWU program were considered to be “the emphasis on understanding and communicating with the audience, the stress on learning theory and varied teaching techniques, and above all the interdisciplinary nature of the program and the diversity of background and experience among the students chosen for it” (Newsom and Silver 1978, 617). The interdisciplinary nature of the program, which attracted students from art, history and science backgrounds, was contentious but was defended by the program’s authors on two grounds:

- all museum educators are interested in providing the maximum opportunities for the public to learn from and enjoy museum collections;
- for all museum educators, the distinction between learning from books and learning from objects is fundamental. (p. 617).

In this understanding the museum is seen as a concept rather than a place. The idea of museum spans discipline-based settings such as art galleries, history museums and parks. Accordingly, the museum educator needs to be a generalist in the fields of education and museums rather than a specialist in any one discipline (Stapp 1996).

Similarly, notwithstanding the more exclusive beginnings indicated by their titles, associations of educators working in these settings have shown an increasing desire to work with and encompass one another. Such groups include the Group for Education in Museums (GEM) in the United Kingdom, the Museum Education Roundtable (MER) in Washington, DC, the National Association for Interpretation (NAI) and the Docent Symposium in the United States and in Canada, Interpretation Canada, the Educators’ Special Interest Group of the Canadian Museums Association, Canadian Art Gallery Educators (CAGE), and the Museum Education Roundtable of Toronto (MERT).
Despite this trend, over time working as a trainer of museum teachers I encountered certain elements of training and professional development that were not transportable from one setting to another. Training intended for docents in an art gallery setting did not always fit interpreters at an historic site. And vice versa, training designed for interpreters was not always applicable to docents. For example, a representative of the Canadian Art Gallery Educators (CAGE) maintained that the Interpretation Canada training program was veritably useless to CAGE because it would require such extensive rewriting for use by docents (Richardson 1996). Similarly, research conducted with participants in the University of Toronto’s “Guiding Tours . . .” course suggested that museum teachers need skills more specific to their type of institution (Castle 1996). Although the nature of the subject matter appeared to be the issue, I felt there might be other, underlying reasons to explain the ambivalence toward generic training felt among museum educators at the different sites. To help answer this I decided to turn to the teachers themselves to explore with them their conception of teaching in the museum setting. I wanted to know from them: How do experienced museum teachers in museums, galleries, and nature centres think about teaching? How do they reason their way through and complete an act of pedagogy? What do they believe they need to know in order to teach? Is this shaped by the respective institution?

THE MUSEUM CURRICULUM

This inquiry is guided and shaped by the “conceptual map” (Vallance 1985, 201) offered by curriculum studies. In particular, the philosophy of curriculum that underlies this study is informed by the work of Joseph Schwab (1978). When he was writing, Schwab clearly had in mind the curriculum of the school. However, it can be seen from the definitions advanced in the introduction to Part I that, while not a school, a museum does encompass deliberately educational activities. A museum can be said to have a curriculum in the broadest sense of the word—curriculum as a medium by which educators attempt to
represent what happens or ought to happen in educational practice and how it is to be achieved.

Schwab argues that the translation of scholarly material into curriculum depends upon four main bodies of experience. The four bodies of experience that must be represented in the process of making curriculum are knowledge of what he terms the "curricular commonplaces"—of subject matter, of the milieu, of the learner, of the teacher. This set of factors, say Connelly and Clandinin (1988, 85), ought to occur in any comprehensive statement about the aims, content, and methods of the curriculum. Taken as a whole they serve to bound the set of statements identified as being curricular. And because they comprise the simplest model for looking at curricular problems, they are also useful analytical tools. The commonplaces allow the researcher to examine materials, historical trends and present controversies from their four different perspectives. They allow the researcher to see where emphasis has been placed and what impact this may have had on the other areas. Thus the curriculum of the museum may be seen as a complex entity of which the teacher is but one, albeit important, part. Therefore, in order to study the teacher, there must first be an understanding of the curriculum as a whole. In this chapter I will deal mainly with the subject matter, the milieu, and the learner as functions of the museum curriculum. This will lead in the next chapter to a focus on the museum teacher and a review of the existing research on teaching. Before doing that, however, I will address briefly the curriculum-making process itself.

**The Curriculum-Making Process in the Museum**

Along with the representatives of the four curricular commonplaces, Schwab (1978) maintains that there is a fifth place at the table (p. 368). This is the place of the "curriculum specialist," whose job it is not only to formulate curricular purposes and reasons for them (p. 369) but also to clarify the values of the planning group so that the curriculum could be open to "scrutiny, criticism, and change" (p. 370). The curricular purposes, reasons, and
values of the museum, gallery, and nature centre are, therefore, important to consider before embarking upon an examination of the curricular commonplaces.

Soren (1990), in her work on curriculum-making in the museum, argues that museum workers think in terms of the “experience” of the museum rather than of a curriculum (p. 293). Sachatello-Sawyer and Fellenz (2001) agree that museum “program planners are not typically creating curriculum; they are designing meaningful experiences” (p. 16). Thus we see models of the “museum experience” in which the visit is perceived as the sum total of the visitor’s personal, social, and physical contexts (Falk and Dierking 1992). Unlike a school, the experience offered by the museum is seen to be “recreational, voluntary, experiential and perceptual” (Beer and Marsh 1988, 223). The goal of the contemporary museum is believed by some to be the provision of an “adequate scenario—a container if you will—for a meaningful experience to take place between a visitor and the artworks” (Worts 1990, 10). The “voluntary, public-access curriculum” of the museum is viewed as one of “orderly images, with several kinds of order implicit in the way the images are arranged but an infinite number of orders possible based on viewers’ itineraries through the galleries and the backgrounds and skills they bring with them on their journeys” (Vallance 1995). Livingstone (2000) argues that it is this “interdisciplinary and holistic approach to curriculum-making that sets the museum apart from other educational institutions” (p. 21).

The Differing Curricula of Museum Education, Public Programming and Interpretation

In practice, however, there is little agreement as to what constitutes the curriculum of the museum (Herbert 1981; Beer 1987; Beer and Marsh 1988; Soren 1990; Science Museum of Minnesota 1995; Vallance 1995; Leinhardt and Crowley 1998a,b; Livingstone 2000). This may stem not only from contrasting definitions of curriculum but also from differing understandings of what constitutes museum education and the values that underlie those
understandings. On the one hand, education is understood to be one of the two key purposes of the museum, as in the CMA’s definition of museum described in the introduction to Part I: “collecting and preserving, studying, interpreting, assembling and exhibiting to the public for its instruction and enjoyment” (CMA 2001). At this institutional or macro-level, education or, more precisely, “instruction,” is seen to play a central role in museum development. However, at the same time, education or, in this case, “interpretation,” is defined as just one of several functions of the institution. At this functional or micro-level education is categorized as museum education, public programming, and interpretation. As I will explore further below, these understandings at macro- and micro-levels are based upon different values and therefore have different curricular purposes (Schwab 1978, 369). In essence, the museum has not one but several different curricula.

At the institutional level the central role of education within the broader scope of the museum, gallery and nature centre has been asserted by many in recent years. This understanding can be seen in publications like Excellence and Equity: Education and the Public Dimension of Museums (AAM Task Force on Museum Education 1991) in the United States, “Education at the Museum: Shared Knowledge” (Herbert et al. 1995) in Canada, and A Common Wealth: Museums and Learning in the United Kingdom (Anderson 1997). From this perspective, education is viewed at its broadest level as a public service. For example, the authors of Excellence and Equity maintain:

The traditional term “museum education” is too specialized to encompass the multifaceted role of museums. This report focuses instead on the expanded notion of public service, defined here as a museum-wide endeavour that involves trustee, staff, and volunteer values and attitudes; exhibitions; public and school programs; publications; public relations efforts; research; decisions about the physical environment of the museum; and choices about collecting and preserving. These are just some of the elements that shape the educational messages museums convey to the public and the public service they provide. (AAM Task Force 1991, 9)
Using such a broadly based understanding of museum education, other voices assert that museum teaching is the prerogative of all who work in the museum and that all museum workers are teachers:

A museum visit... is an experience. This experience has given rise to exploration of museum teaching, which remains a somewhat vague, incomplete, though very real concept. Let's retrace the steps. It starts with institutions that have set up a museological organization based on a theme. Once it is explored, framed, and priorities are determined as to its components, this theme suggests the way it will be conveyed. Besides exhibits and their museological means, other vehicles for conveying a theme include publications, seminars, debates, symposia, theatrical productions, music, educational workshops, and "discovery spaces". The underlying goal is to encourage the personal adaptation of messages (Screven). Teaching is therefore part of the museum concept itself. Museum teaching recurs in exhibits' multidimensional approach to communication... It is this array of means that structures museum teaching to a large extent: taking visitors' receptiveness into account; combining accuracy, quality and accessibility; having visitors accompanied by guides or facilitators; replacing formal learning by informal learning, except for school groups; overlapping means of communication, including atmosphere, circuit, narration, decoration, interactive elements and sensory appeal... Museum teaching is made useful by the increasing complexity of knowledge to be communicated. It takes place at the intersection of knowledge and mediation. (Grandmont 1995, 327-28)

This macro-level discussion is useful insofar as it raises important questions regarding the nature of education, teaching, and learning within the museum. However, at the same time, it serves to obscure equally valid questions and concerns having to do with what has been labelled traditional museum education, teaching and learning. For example, the deliberate exclusion of "school groups" from Grandmont's statement above on teaching in museums discounts an influential sector of the museum audience and one to which much face-to-face museum teaching is currently tailored. I will return to this point below.

In contrast to this macro-level approach to museum education, the Canadian Museums Association (1997, 1999) is working at a micro-level to outline the competencies required to perform activities related to museum education, as it has been traditionally defined. Competency-based learning concepts and principles are applied as means to improving job performance and the accountability of the educational process at the professional and technical levels in museums (Oliver 1995, 6). Although some contend that
competency-based education contributes to an atomization and segmentation of knowledge that can destroy any sense of unity and cohesion in the curriculum (p. 7), the CMA maintains their approach is guided by a broader definition of competencies:

Competencies are general descriptions of the abilities to perform successfully in areas specified. They include knowledge, skills and attributes and can be defined in ways which include one, two or all three of those elements. In defining competencies, we include knowledge that can be observed. However, competencies can only capture a small portion of the individual's complete bank of knowledge, all of which contributes to their ability to perform. (CMA 1997, 1)

In order to capture the sense of this broader bank of knowledge, the CMA identifies competencies both as they are “shared” by all museum workers and as they are “functional” to perform the traditional jobs within museums. Shared competencies are organized under the headings of *philosophical and ethical, public value, organizational, and individual personal* (p. 11). Those functional competencies deemed to be directly applicable to the museum educator are grouped by the CMA under the heading “Knowledge Sharing” and include intellectual access and information services; visitor services; educational programming; public programming; interpretation; publications and products; and design and production (CMA 1999, 13).

For the purposes of this study I am particularly interested in educational programming, public programming, and interpretation because they present an idea of the different perspectives from which education, teaching, and learning are viewed at the working level within the museum itself. These definitions allow some insight into the museum’s “curricular purposes and reasons for them” (Schwab 1978, 369):

*Educational Programming* . . . museum programs which transfer and exchange knowledge in a systematic manner especially but not restricted to programming for schools and young people. . . . Education is used here in the narrower sense of imparting information and knowledge in a systematic process. It is less formally established than schools and other institutions of formal education but more formal than experiential and developmental learning processes. It does not preclude the inclusion of less formal and more collaborative techniques within the more formal structure. (CMA 1999, 54)
Public Programming . . . museum programs to provide informal learning opportunities for people of all ages and backgrounds with emphasis on experiential, developmental and interactive learning. (p. 55)

Interpretation . . . the ability to use knowledge of various types of communication and language to explain and make relevant to others information and meaning imbedded in material objects, specimens, exhibitions, performances and demonstrations created by the museum. (p. 56)

THE DOMAINS OF LEARNING

In many ways, the three distinctions made by the CMA—interpretation, public programming, and educational programming—parallel what Thomas (1991) conceptualizes as “domains” of learning. Therefore, at this point a discussion of these may help elucidate the meanings of the three museum functions. Thomas has named three “domains” among which people move by making certain decisions about learning: the Social Domain, the Learning Domain, and the Educational Domain (p. 35–36). He argues that people make individual and collective decisions about learning that are determined by time, culture, geography, accident, and other specific circumstances. However various these may be, these decisions have certain features in common.

Briefly, Thomas maintains that a person’s life is mainly conducted in the Social Domain, where activities are devoted to the satisfaction of his or her own needs. Groups such as tribes, countries, or nations form to provide mutual physical and psychological security. The key role associated with the Social Domain is that of citizen because theoretically it includes all other social, economic, and political roles (p. 38). A person enters the second, or Learning Domain when a need fails to be met and a new behaviour is sought. Not surprisingly, the key role in this second domain is that of learner. Even though learning can only be accomplished by the individual, participation in groups can both stimulate learning and help identify learning needs. Therefore, the secondary role is that of group member (p. 43). The third, or Educational Domain is entered when a person has an educational need, one that can only be satisfied by resorting to some part of an educational
system (p. 45). The dominant role in the Educational Domain is that of student (p. 49). Accordingly, Thomas argues, the primary business of the Educational Domain is teaching (p. 45). The significant difference between the student and the learner lies in the student's surrender to the teacher of the right to evaluate his or her learning in the interest of public evaluation (p. 130). In the Learning Domain, on the other hand, the teacher and the program are the first to be evaluated and, if necessary, changed if the learner does not learn what he or she wants to know (p. 114).

**Museum Education**

Although Thomas (1991) argues that museums belong in the Learning Domain (p. 174), an understanding of the formal aspects of museum education, or what Thomas calls the Educational Domain, is probably the most widely shared amongst the different sites and, therefore, the least problematic. Dunn (1977) defined museum education in the history museum as "... systematic instruction, within a specified time period, in subject areas related to the collection, the results of which are capable of being measured" (p. 15). Similarly, Civitarese, Legg, and Zuefle (1997) argue that "education" in natural settings requires in-depth knowledge and investment of time in order to influence behaviour. It must also be measurable (p. 10). Thomas (2000) contends that museum education is "outcome-centred" as compared to the "process-centred" nature of interpretation, where the outcome is dependent on the learner.

Little has been written on the history of art museum education in Canada, but American museum educators point to the work of John Cotton Dana, founder and director of the Newark Museum (1909–29), as the first to fully embrace the art museum as an educational institution (McCoy 1989, 136; Rice 1995). "A museum is good only so far as it is of use," he wrote (Rice 1995). Because Dana came from library science, his work is seen as part of a larger movement in the United States toward continuing education opportunities for adults through public libraries, organized societies, leagues, clubs,
institutions, and fairs (McCoy, 1989, 136; Williams 1994, 25). Today groups of schoolchildren and youths are the target audiences for education programs, although adults participating in formal educational endeavours increasingly use them.

In the recent Ontario Museum Association *Colloquium on Learning in Museums V*, several papers were devoted to the ways and means by which the new Ontario school curriculum could be fulfilled in the museum setting. But there was a sense, sometimes unarticulated, that school field trips should be more than “extracurricular learning experiences that augment school learning” (Livingstone 2000, 20). In the same vein, British museum educators worry that they have focused too much on the development of programs for school groups. A recent publication in Britain advocated for more time spent on the development of programs for other audiences because “museum educators spend approximately 90% of their time working with schools—and they represent just 10% of the total museum audience” (Stevenson 2000, 3).

Ansbacher (1998), writing from the perspective of science-centre educators, argues that this conundrum can be addressed by the application of Dewey’s (1963) theory of experience:

> Everything depends upon the quality of the experience that is had. The quality of any experience has two aspects. There is an immediate aspect of agreeableness or disagreeableness, and there is its influence upon later experiences. (p. 27)

Entertainment, or “the spirit of play,” is represented by the immediate experience only, whereas education lies in the positive future effects of the experience. These are not incompatible, but without reflection an experience may lead to no particular learning, or worse, may be mis-educative. Thus visitors may have information delivered to them but no skills to reflect upon and understand it. In that case, the “most likely outcome is for visitors not to pursue further learning, but to pursue further fun” (Ansbacher 1998, 43). The purpose of docents, guides, or explainers in the exhibit is to “serve the same function as the labels—facilitating the visitor[s’] experience” by helping them reflect upon their immediate experiences and thereby learn from them (Ansbacher 1999, 27).
Public Programming

Public programming is less well-defined across the different settings encompassed by the museum community. The emphasis in the CMA's definition on the provision of "informal learning opportunities" opens the door to an ongoing debate in the museum community as to the nature of learning in the museum. Hein (1998) argues that "formal" and "informal" describe the administrative attributes of educational settings, such as the existence of a specific, hierarchical curriculum, but not their pedagogic qualities (p. 7). Hence, he would interpret the CMA's definition to mean that public programs provide opportunities for learning in an informal setting. In other words, learning is learning. On the other hand, Falk and Dierking (2000) contend that the learning experiences that take place in museums are "free-choice learning," as characterized by being non-linear, personally motivated, and involving considerable choice (p. xii). In their meaning, public programs provide opportunities for informal or, as Falk and Dierking prefer to call it, free-choice learning.

In practice, however, public programming tends to include all those programs not intended for formal education audiences. Matelic and Heald (1989) defined it for the historic site community simply as "museum programs where historical interpretation depends on the involvement of staff members". An understanding of interpretation then becomes critical to both public programming and interpretation. Let me turn now to the meaning of interpretation, the most challenging of the three.

Interpretation

As the word is used in historical and natural settings, the original definition of interpretation is attributed to Freeman Tilden (1967), who was an employee of the National Park Service in the United States:

[Interpretation is] an educational activity which aims to reveal meanings and relationships through the use of original objects, by firsthand experience, and by illustrative media, rather than simply to communicate factual information. (p. 8)
Although here he defines interpretation in terms of education, there is evidence that Tilden later changed his definition to read “Interpretation is a *recreational* activity . . .” in order to distinguish it from formal education as described above (Randall 1996). The first Canadian definition of the function that I have been able to locate is Dunn’s (1977):

> [Interpretation is] activities that responsibly explain, and/or display the collection in such a personalized manner as to make its background, significance, meaning and qualities appealing and relevant to the various museum publics. (p. 15)

More recently, Civitarese, Legg, and Zuefle (1997), writing from the perspective of American environmental education, have proposed this definition:

> Interpretation is a communication activity designed to enhance the quality of the recreational experience of the visitor and to inspire greater appreciation of the resource in an enjoyable manner. (p. 10)

In the above cases, interpretation takes place in a recreational setting for informal audiences who may choose to leave at any moment (p. 28). Thus the timing and setting for the experience, coupled with the expectations and needs of the audiences become important factors not acknowledged in the CMA definition. Interpretation in the context of the historical or natural site is a visitor-centred activity that might be appropriately placed in Thomas’s Learning Domain or even in the Social Domain when the experience is considered to be purely recreational. As Christensen (1991) writes, “Visitors come to parks to enjoy themselves” (p. 11).

Yet the recreational nature of interpretation can be problematic. Not only is the experience difficult to measure in educational terms, but interpreters and their management tend to “opt for the educational identity because they think of it as more prestigious” (Randall 1996, 7). However, studies in visitor motivation (Csikszentmihalyi and Hermanson 1995a,b; Randall 1996; Paris 2000) and work with adult groups in museums (Silverman 1993; Worts 1995; Leinhardt and Crowley 1998a,b; Silverman 1998; Abu-Shumays and Leinhardt 2000; Leinhardt et al. 2000) have begun to isolate different factors that may contribute to a satisfying visit for those coming with other than educational intent, many of which have to do with the social context of the visit (Falk and Dierking 2000).
Randall (1996) contends that measures of success for interpretation as a recreational enterprise depend on expressions of commendation, repeat visits, and willingness to undergo the expenses (of time, money, and effort) (p. 7).

While there is some agreement in cultural and natural settings regarding the nature and characteristics of museum education and interpretation, this is not shared with those working in art museums today. It is ironic then that the idea of interpretation discussed above is believed to stem from these same institutions (Dewar 1995). In 1896 both the Boston Museum of Fine Arts in the United States and the Louvre in France began offering interpretive tours to the public (p. 4). In 1915 Gilman (1984), from the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, introduced the term docent to the museum world. He argued that the term complemented the museum’s other functions of gardant or preservation and monstrant or exhibition. Docent stood for the “business of mental preparation . . . called teaching” (p. 148). The “docent office” with respect to a work of art was to help the viewer grasp what “its maker intended it to tell us” (p. 148). Gilman argued that school teaching or education like that advocated by Dana was antithetical to the nature of the museum because it was constrained by collective instruction and was compelled to aim at examination. Instead, the docent office was

... to aim not at attainment, but at progress, not at graduation but at education . . . It should address itself chiefly to minds already mature and only under restrictions to children. It should be undertaken in the spirit of free intercourse, not in that of compulsion, in the spirit of play and not of work, seeking to offer not what the docent wants to teach but what the spectator wants to know . . . (p. 154)

Thus Gilman used the words “docent function” to describe a unique form of museum education that in its recreational or play aspect and in its visitor-centred approach was comparable to what those in the cultural and natural setting later termed “interpretation”.

However, it is difficult to find the same differentiation of terms in the art museum today. Docent denotes a museum tour guide, usually a volunteer. The word has come to describe a position rather than a function. Art museum education is dominated by school-based programs that comprise the majority of a department’s offerings (Caston 1989, 102).
Docents conduct both school tours and public programs. In her recent book *From Knowledge to Narrative*, Roberts (1997) proposes a definition of museum education that encompasses entertainment, empowerment, and experience. When she writes about the “Changing Practices of Interpretation” (p. 60–72) she tacitly uses the dictionary definition of *interpretation* as in “expound the meaning of”, comparable to the CMA definition above. She uses the word *entertainment* to mean “museum practices and experiences that fall outside such traditional educational goals as cognitive engagement and information transfer” (p. 131) by reaching visitors through linguistic and cultural forms that are comfortable to them.

To complicate discussion even further, the term *interpretation* is commonly used in the art museum to denote a stage in the art criticism process. For example, Ott’s (1993) “Image Watching” system defines interpretation as a critical thinking category in which the student’s opinions and premises are paramount (p. 81). This is not to suggest that art museums do not provide innovative tours, programs, and special events for other audiences; there are many such examples. However, there is no term in the art museum that adequately describes the philosophical differences in motivation and method that the terms *education* and *interpretation* offer in natural and cultural heritage settings.

As those interested in museum education reach out to those interested in museum interpretation, the essential philosophical difference between the two may have been ignored in favour of accentuating the many commonalities of form and function. Ironically, the lack of shared meaning for *education* and *interpretation*, or the inability to integrate the two, may be the most formidable barrier to the development of generic training and professional development for museum teachers. The foregoing philosophical discussions informed my thinking about the training and professional development of museum teachers. However, I came to question how such theoretical problems are resolved in practice. How do museum teachers—those charged with face-to-face education and interpretation—describe, understand, and evaluate their roles in these different settings? Do
education, interpretation, and docent function have meaning for museum teachers? If so, what does this mean for the practice of teaching in the museum setting?

In Chapters One and Two I raise such questions, not rhetorically, but as the basis for the research I undertook. I will revisit these questions at the conclusion of Chapter Two. As I said at the beginning of this section, one starting point for this study is Schwab’s (1978) philosophy of curriculum and his concept of the four “commonplaces”—subject matter, milieu, learners and learning, and teachers and teaching. Having introduced the differing curricula of the museum and the process of curriculum-making, let me now turn to a discussion of the subject matter of the museum curriculum.

Subject Matter

The differing meanings of interpretation, public programming, and education suggest that there may be an underlying subject-matter structure affecting teaching in the museum setting. Schwab (1978) characterizes subject matter as the scholarly materials under treatment and the discipline from which they come. The discipline matters not only in terms of the information imparted (the substance) but also in terms of imparting the structure or the arts and skills needed to “do” the discipline (Schwab 1964). However, the subject matter of the museum can be challenging to define. Is the proper subject matter of the museum the artifacts, the organizing discipline of the institution, or the museum itself?

The subject matter of the museum is ostensibly the objects, ideas, and phenomena of which “material evidence” is comprised. Traditionally, museums are considered to be about the objects in their collections. From this perspective, the kind of museum is determined by the kinds of objects in the collections and the uses to which the objects were or will be put (Burcaw 1975, 47). Thus under the catch-all term of museum are clumped institutions as diverse as art galleries, children’s museums, history and nature museums, eco-museums, historic houses, historic villages, interpretive centres, and even zoos and aquaria. However, the relevance of objects to the collection is determined by how well the
objects serve the goals of the museum. In the traditional museum world such goals relate to the founding discipline of the institution, be it art, history, or science. Discipline-based scholars or *curators*, as they are known in the museum setting, make the decision regarding selection of objects. Their choices have tended to control the development of the museum’s curriculum. From the curator’s perspective the function of the other curricular elements is simply to make the subject matter more readily accessible. In this scenario, the museum teacher is a “conduit” funnelling information from the curator to the museum visitor (Castle 1995a). As Anderson (1995) explains:

> Museum research activities are conceived of as hierarchical and sequential. In this process, the main focus is on the collection, and the function of learning research (if it is considered at all) is to make the research discoveries of the experts available to a non-specialist audience. (p. 27)

**The Discipline of Museology**

Museum educators struggle with their position in relation to the discipline base of the institution. Although there are no standard requirements for museum educators in Canada and the United States, they are most often expected to have attained the level of an undergraduate degree in the subject matter of the institution. Like fellow staff members within their own institutions, they seek to be specialists in the subject matter of their discipline. Yet at the same time it is assumed that museum educators are in a unique position to help define “what it means to be a museum today” (Perry et al. 2000). As I have discussed in the introduction to this chapter, museum educators endeavour to be generalists in the discipline of museology and its related field of museum education (Stapp 1996).

**Museum Literacy**

In the same way that Schwab (1964) maintains there is a substance and a structure to the disciplines, it has been demonstrated that successful museum behaviour stems from two types of previous experience: knowledge of exhibit content and knowledge of how to use the museum in order to gain information (Falk and Dierking 1992, 80). Stapp (1984)
describes this second, how-to knowledge as “museum and object literacy.” She argues that museum visitors must achieve such literacy in order to manage their own learning in the museum. In this she acknowledges her debt to John Dewey who in 1934, in *Art as Experience*, described the need for the visitor to work at creating his own experience.

Dewey (1980) wrote disparagingly of the museum teacher of his time:

> A crowd of visitors steered through a picture-gallery by a guide, with attention called here and there to some high point, does not perceive; only by accident is there even interest in seeing a picture for the sake of subject matter vividly realized. (p. 54)

In response, Stapp (1984) writes that the visitor must know how to “read” the museum in order to use it for educational purposes. Stapp describes what she means by literacy:

> .. basic museum literacy means competence in reading objects (“visual literacy”), but full museum literacy signifies competence in drawing upon the museum’s holdings and services purposefully and independently. Museum literacy therefore implies genuine and full visitor access to the museum by virtue of mastery of the language of museum objects and familiarity with the museum as an institution. (p. 3)

Such user competence is embedded in the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that result from education and practice. As Stapp argues (very much in tune with Dewey), “mere physical access or superficial informational gestures fail to fulfil the museum’s public mission” (p. 3).

In some ways then, the museum educator serves two masters—the discipline-base of the museum and the discipline of museology itself. Such ambiguity contains the potential for conflict. From the vantage point of museology, museum educators promote the commonalities rather than the differences that exist among museums. Although this serves to strengthen museology, at the same time it appears to obscure the development of an educational philosophy that acknowledges and works with what may be different discipline-based realms of meaning. Without this level of consciousness the tendency is to cast all museum experiences in the light of one’s own institutional setting. As G. Ellis Burcaw notes in his *Introduction to Museum Work* (1975), “people involved in the arts and
in art museums frequently refer to art museums simply as ‘museums,’ as though other kinds of museums do not exist” (p. 70). By seeking to identify themselves as educators first and subject-matter specialists second, have museum educators discounted the importance of understanding the different patterns and structures of knowledge that underpin the museum milieu?

**Milieu**

The controversies surrounding subject matter questions have an important impact on the milieu of the museum and its accompanying body of experience. The milieus, Schwab (1978) says, are the environments in which the learning takes place and in which the results of that learning will be brought to bear. The museum milieu can be construed both as the surroundings created by museum workers to contain material evidence—the “adequate container” noted above—as well as the larger social, political and economic milieus within which the museum exists as an institution.

**Internal Milieu**

The internal milieu of the museum is constructed to house its subject matter, or collections. This physical context includes the architecture and “feel” of the building, as well as the objects and artifacts contained within and the exhibits into which they are placed. The discipline base of the institution is reflected in the milieu. Consider, for example, the differences between the physical spaces of a traditional art gallery and a history museum. Phenix (1964) argues that each discipline encompasses a distinct “realm of meaning.” The goal of the “esthetic realm”, of which the visual arts are a part, is to understand artists and their works “in the light of their specific aims and not in terms of any universal and permanent standards of validity” (p. 164). Thus, in the spaces of the traditional art gallery is a milieu that contains the artwork and directs attention to it but does not attempt to
contextualize it. The traditional art gallery is a physical space not unlike the temple that encourages a contemplative approach aimed at discovering subjective meaning.

On the other hand, in the history museum the milieu is premised on a different realm of meaning. According to Phenix, the aim of history is to understand "from the inside" (p. 239) decisions that people have made in the past. "Historical understanding is personal insight expressed in ordinary language, informed by scientific knowledge, transformed by esthetic imagination, and infused by moral consciousness" (p. 240). Therefore, the traditional history museum presents in a succession of galleries a narrative through which the historian/curator has "described, ordered, and interpreted" the human events of the past.

This is further complicated when the milieu acts upon the subject matter. In the creation of the milieus—which include not only the building but also the exhibits—the collections acquire new meaning in relation to one another and to the visitor. The object in an exhibition does not have the same meaning for the visitor as does the object when it stands alone. Furthermore, the object acquires a different meaning for the visitor than would that same object in his or her own home (Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton 1981). For example, the non-linear, multidimensional, "real" qualities of the history museum encourage visitors to believe that what they see is "true" (Ruffins 1985). The historic house setting appears to be a found object preserved intact from the 19th century rather than a curatorial production. Cameron (1992) argues the museum encourages this reaction since its fundamental purpose is to tell people what the objects are supposed to mean:

For "researches" read identifies, classifies and labels; for "exhibits" read contextualizes; and for "communicates" read pronounces. This is the ritual of naming. As the priest is the gatekeeper of the temple, granting admission to the faith by baptism, so the curator is the gatekeeper of the museum, granting an object admission to the institution's very specific reality by naming, by labelling, by imposing a construct specific to the museum's perceptions of reality, mythology or even ideas of absolute truth . . . . It is insufficiently understood that a museum's power lies not in the possession of objects and collections, but in the acceptance of its authority to name
them by both label and context. This is the most jealously guarded divine
right of the museum as the curator of *soi-distant* public collections. (p. 9)

The power of the milieu is such that the museum educator on exhibition
development teams tends to be subsumed by this process of naming, to become more like
traditional curators, rather than for educators to change the process itself by emphasizing
the perspectives of the learner or of the teacher. Educational activities like gallery teaching
continue to be viewed as add-ons, to be considered only after the exhibit is open to the
public rather than as an integral part of the milieu (Durbin 1996, vii). How do museum
teachers themselves understand the milieu *in* which and *about* which they teach?

**EXTERNAL MILIEU**

The larger social, political, and economic milieus within which the museum exists as an
institution are also important to any discussion of the museum’s curriculum. During the
year in which this study was undertaken (1997–98), museums in the province of Ontario,
where the study took place were undergoing a period of tremendous change. An analysis of
the 1997 Museum Operating Grant applications to the then Ontario Ministry of Citizenship,
Culture, and Recreation (1998) offers some insight into the issues museum workers saw
themselves facing. In the questionnaire accompanying the operating grant applications,
museum workers were asked to describe the issues or changes that had had an impact on
their operations. In no order of priority, the following were identified: increased costs of
operation, reduced funding from both direct sources including the province, municipalities,
conservation authorities, the Ontario Arts Council, and corporate sponsors like tobacco
companies and indirect sources (caused by reductions in municipal transfers and boards of
education budgets), and a rapid rate of change. These issues were believed by the
respondents to have brought about, among other things, the increasing cost of maintaining
or acquiring new staff skills, the necessity of staff restructuring due to funding changes,
and, as a result, a growing dependence on volunteers to supplement fewer paid staff
without the time needed for orientation, training, and development of those volunteers. Concern was also expressed that museums, as well as funders, could lose sight of the museum's mandate in their efforts to maintain viable funding levels (MCZCR 1998, 11). Are museum teachers aware of these external issues affecting museums within which they teach? If so, does this awareness affect their teaching?

THE COMMUNITY OF LEARNERS

Some contend that museum professionals differ fundamentally from visitors in their approach to the milieu of the museum. As insiders, their view may be limited to their own intellectual discipline or to the individual exhibits or objects with which they work. Museum professionals are thought to be unable to perceive the whole "museum experience" (Falk and Dierking 1992). This becomes difficult if the museum is viewed as a unique learning environment, possibly even as a community of learners or a master/apprentice relationship, wherein the museum teacher teaches not only exhibit-specific content but also the "knowledge of how to use the museum in order to gain information" (Stapp 1984; Lave and Wenger 1991; Falk and Dierking 1992, 80; Matusov and Rogoff 1995). Yet, if museum teachers are unable to perceive the gestalt of the situation—the interactive experience—what then do they think they are teaching? Are they fully open to the possibilities of the museum?

Learners and Learning

If there is controversy within the milieu of museum education, then no less so is there debate and confusion about conceptions of learning and, indeed, who the learners really are. Perhaps in response to the trends indicated above, the focus of contemporary discussions about museums has shifted away from the subject matter, or what is to be learned, to the visitor, or who is doing the learning (Davis and Gardner 1993).
The learners are generally considered to be the museum’s visitors or users of museum services such as outreach programming or Web-based offerings. In the context of public schools, Schwab’s (1978) model calls for familiarity with both the general knowledge of the age groups represented as well as close knowledge of individual learners (p. 366). Familiarity with individual learners can be a challenge considering the increasingly diverse audiences that museums, as public institutions, are expected to serve. To address this issue, museums use extensive visitor research to determine both who the audience is and is not, and why people do or do not attend. While early studies focused on identifying demographic characteristics such as age, sex, marital status, and so on, more recent visitor research has focused on what Marilyn Hood (1993) terms the “psychographics” or lifestyle dimensions of the audience. These lifestyle dimensions encompass their attitudes, values, opinions, and interests; Hood argues that these are all descriptors of how we look at ourselves and other people and how we behave.

**HOW PEOPLE LEARN IN MUSEUMS**

One aspect of behaviour that has attracted particular interest has been the question of how people learn in museums. In particular, there has been increasing interest in the processes of learning and the physical environments and activities in which the learning occurs (Falk and Dierking 2000, 53–67). Basing their ideas upon Barker and Wright’s work, Falk and Dierking suggest that people organize their lives by placing themselves in situations that allow them to do what they want, when they want. Thus they go to a mall to shop or to a theatre to see a movie. These physical/social settings are called “behaviour settings” (p. 54). Some adult educators maintain that these behaviour settings can also be categorized as distinct learning environments. People choose to learn what they want or need to know within the appropriate domain. Thus the museum is a distinctive “non-formal” learning environment different from both the formal setting of the school and the informal nature of the pub (Bown 1987; Anderson 1995). Conventions exist as to the pattern of behaviour
appropriate to each setting. These patterns of behaviour may be learned or modelled. For example, people may either learn about visiting museums by having gone to them all their lives or by observing others to determine the appropriate behaviour (Falk and Dierking 1992).

Anderson (1995) maintains that museum competencies may be enhanced by the development of the user’s skills as an independent learner. Independent learners, he says, see themselves as being part of a community of learners with whom they share knowledge and accumulated wisdom. Within this learning community they provide specialist advice and mentoring to unskilled newcomers, or new visitors to the museum setting (p. 24). In other words, they act as teachers to their peers. In some ways this resembles the master/apprentice relationship, the master embodying practice at its fullest, the apprentice learning through participation in a community of practice (Lave and Wenger 1991, 85). As such, the development of museum literacy might be seen as a form of “situated learning,” like an apprenticeship, in which there is possible not only a dyadic form of teaching/learning but also learning from a “richly diverse field of actors and . . . other forms of relationships of participation” (p. 56). The goal is the apprentice’s full participation in the community of practice—an “increasing sense of identity as a master practitioner” (p. 111). By continued and thoughtful participation as a learner in the museum’s community of practice, the museum teacher may become a “master practitioner” of learning in the museum setting. However, these skills will be of little use to the museum visitor unless, as Bown (1987) argues, the museum teacher is “conscientized” and comes to treat museum visitors as not only co-learners but also “potential teachers” (p. 16).

Such a theory becomes problematic when viewed from the perspective of school groups who are brought to the museum, gallery, or park as a captive audience, in accordance with a school-based curriculum that frequently emphasizes in-depth knowledge, investment of time, and examination of results. This can be compounded by museum circumstances, as described in the “External Milieu” sub-section above, in which
inadequate funding has resulted in small numbers of staff and large numbers of program participants. In such a situation the *raison d'être* of the tour can become crowd control rather than teaching. Research to date indicates that children asked to compare school tours to visits with their families reported that leisure-time visits were more fun and less structured, while the school visits were associated with worksheets and being hurried along to specific exhibits (Civitarese et. al. 1997, 10). The learning experiences of school tours, if they are remembered at all, may be seen as "school knowledge" rather than as the kind of experiences that might affect how children live and act in their daily lives (Barnes 1992, 20).

Do museum teachers share these concepts? Do they utilize them in their work? Whether or not museum educators think helping visitors to become "museum literate" is their primary function may depend on the museum educator's conception of what constitutes learning. In the next section I address different conceptions of learning in museums.

**Conceptions of Learning**

Rice (2000) has criticized her colleagues in museum education for being too quick to "jump on the latest theoretical bandwagon before fully understanding its limitations" (p. 225). She argues instead for a broader exploration because "theories are useful not only insofar as they justify practice, but rather as they reform, improve, and invigorate it." (p. 225) This becomes particularly important for the museum teacher whose model of learning will have a profound influence upon the provision of learning opportunities or the setting of tasks, the way in which learners are both spoken and listened to, and the extent to which information is transmitted and tested or shared through programs. "[P]atterns of teaching that can be observed in a teacher's normal behaviour are based upon implicit models of knowledge and how it is learnt" (Barnes 1992, 20).
If we look at learning theories at a basic level, on the one hand there are those who conceive of knowledge as existing independently of the people who know it, and on the other hand, there are those who believe that the learner needs to be engaged in the purposive reconstruction of the knowledge offered. The latter group currently predominate in museum education. In a widely read museum education journal, Jeffery (2000) defined constructivism, as based on her reading of the work of Novak and Gowin, in this way:

Constructivist theory holds that prior knowledge is of primary importance. Learners come to us with a wealth of knowledge already organized. It is upon this knowledge structure that learners hang new information, creating new links to their pre-existing knowledge. The more links created, the more stable this new knowledge will be. Individuals learn when they modify existing conceptual structures, creating new links and integrating new concepts. To learn meaningfully, a person must choose to integrate new knowledge into his or her conceptual structure, relating the new knowledge to pre-existing knowledge and experiences. (p. 213)

To put this in perspective, Matusov and Rogoff (1995) argue that at least four distinct philosophies of learning underlie learning and teaching in museums of which constructivism is but one. The philosophies that they have identified are, learning as transmission, learning as solo discovery, learning as transfer of control over the curriculum, and learning as part of a community of learners. It may be useful to briefly review what each of these philosophies means when applied to the museum setting, along with the pedagogical approach each entails.

As viewed by Matusov and Rogoff (1995), the traditional transmission model treats museum visitors as receptacles for knowledge provided by the museum staff. The visitor is required to attend to the exhibit and digest information provided by the exhibit designer. Museum staff must find ways to attract and maintain visitors’ attention and to control how visitors use the information. The solo discovery model treats the visitor as an isolated active constructor of knowledge. It is assumed that the visitor will be self-motivated to learn in the stimulating, enriched environment provided by the museum. Involvement by the museum staff is seen as a potential hindrance to the visitor’s creativity. The transfer approach attempts to combine the first two approaches in a way that connects tasks so that visitors...
themselves have an opportunity to discover relations between exhibited objects. Staff continue to define the learning curriculum and the educational tasks that visitors are responsible for engaging in and solving.

The final, or community of learners, approach focuses on mutuality in joint activity and guidance rather than control by one side or the other. In this it is reminiscent of Thomas's (1991) Learning Domain discussed above. In a community of learners as defined by Matusov and Rogoff, both the visitors and museum workers are seen as active in structuring the inquiry, with museum staff assuming responsibility for guiding the process and visitors learning to participate in the management of their own learning. “Communities of practice” (Matusov and Rogoff 1995, 104), like museum workers—who may include curators, museum educators, conservators, and so on—or special interest groups such as quilters, railway buffs, or book groups, may also form and interact with other like communities. In their most recent book, Falk and Dierking (2000) have taken the concept a step further to redefine families, adult groups, and school groups as self-directing communities of learners who may or may not choose to interact with other groups or museum staff members (p. 91-112).

In even this brief review of learning philosophies and the learner it is possible to see the roots and/or the results of the confusion and controversy that plague museum education discussions. Are museum teachers aware of these philosophical issues? What are their theories of learning, implicit and explicit? How do they make use of them in their teaching?

SUMMARY

Using Schwab's (1978) model of the curriculum, in this chapter I have explored understandings of subject matter, milieu, and conceptions of learners and learning as expressed in the literature related to museums, galleries, and parks. The point has been not so much to expose the different means and ends of the commonplaces as to suggest that
different values underlie the educational intentions expressed through each commonplace. Schwab maintains that it is through deliberations amongst representatives of the commonplaces that these values are made more and more explicit and, therefore, open to "scrutiny, criticism, and change" (p. 370). This is evident in the various understandings of museum education, public programming, and interpretation and in the links of these different curricula to values inherent in the differing subject matters, institutional milieus, and approaches to learners and learning. Soren (1990) noted that the process of planning for public education in the museum had features typical of a curriculum-making process, in that there was an attempt to bring together potential learners and specific subject matter toward a particular valued end, but concluded that the exclusion of public educators from the process tended to make it less viable (p. 293–94). In Chapter Two I explore conceptions of teacher and teaching within the museum, gallery, and nature-centre settings, together with prior research on the subject.
CHAPTER TWO

TEACHERS AND TEACHING IN THE MUSEUM

CONCEPTIONS OF TEACHERS AND TEACHING

We now come to the fourth body of experience that should be represented in the curriculum group: knowledge of the teachers. This, says Schwab (1978), should include "knowledge of what these teachers are likely to know and how flexible and ready they are likely to be to learn new materials and new ways of teaching" (p. 367). We need to know who they are and how they tend to feel about themselves.

Museum Teachers

As I have suggested in the introduction to this thesis, museum teachers are not easily defined. The job titles by which these educators are known include museum teacher, guide, docent, host, and natural or cultural interpreter. Teacher is a term not used frequently in museums except in reference to a visiting schoolteacher. Such ambiguity regarding job title is common to many museum jobs. As noted by the authors of the report The Museum Labour Force in Canada there is a general "categorical miasma" (Ekos 1989). Traditional and functional approaches to classifying museum workers have resulted in confusion and inconsistent use on a national basis. This is exacerbated in the case of museum teachers because they are typically part-time or volunteer workers and therefore excluded from major occupational studies like that noted above (p. 6). What do museum teachers call themselves? What effect, if any, does this "categorical miasma" have upon their teaching?
Museum Teaching

Teaching in the museum has come to denote little beyond the didactic style evident in the traditional transmission model of learning described above. Or worse, it is seen as a barrier to the visitor's own creativity, as in the solo discovery model discussed in Chapter One. Instead of being taught, visitors are to be empowered to construct their own understandings, navigate their own course, and decide what they will or will not look at (Worts 1990; Davis and Gardner 1993). An American report asserted that "when museum education emphasizes teaching and verbal communication, it does a disservice to the museum as a learning environment" (AAM Commission 1984, 59). A Canadian art museum educator tells her audience of museum studies students that volunteers at her gallery do not teach because their "pedagogies are embedded in activity"; instead, they "sort materials and choreograph space" (Mazaros 1998). Museum teachers perceive their role to be "paradoxical and conflicting" (Duthie 1990) when the museum is seen to be a learning resource that has no place for teaching. Such attitudes have made problematic the study of teaching in the museum setting.

This is exacerbated when museum educators are themselves unable to provide a coherent explanation of the nature and source of their own teaching and learning processes (Anderson 1995). To date, they have struggled to articulate the components and the contributing forces of their own teaching/learning experiences and have not yet developed an intellectual base and a theoretical foundation to support their work (Worts 1990, 10). This has led to the development of programs that lack an intellectual sub stratum or curricular platform to clearly identify the values, beliefs and assumptions about learning and teaching (Eisner and Dobbs 1986, 31). In the absence of a strongly developed conceptual framework to assist in the consideration of what kind of excellence is sought, museum educators run the risk of doing something simply because they can and not because it fulfils the goals of the museum (Weil 1989, 29). More importantly, they fail to
understand and perhaps challenge the warrants and backing (Toulmin 1969) for the museum curriculum of which they are a part. As Johnson (1981) notes:

If docents are to serve as mediators of knowledge and experience for school tours, then they should be aware of the many assumptions embedded in the knowledge they transmit during the tours. Docents not only need to examine their own beliefs . . . but to help the children and teachers to examine theirs. (p. 64)

Teaching as Occupation, Act, and Enterprise

The puzzlement that surrounds the conceptualization of teaching is not restricted to the museum setting. Komisar (1968) describes the difficulty in dealing with the subject of teaching within school settings and establishes a framework that may be useful to this discussion about museum teaching. People talk about teaching, he maintains, “as if there is a quite familiar and easily identifiable activity we happen to call teaching,” whereas the question really is whether or not what we are “inclined to call teaching, that looks like teaching, and that others call teaching deserves the name” (p. 64). He goes on to describe three levels or sectors of teaching: (1) teaching as occupation, (2) teaching as enterprise, and (3) teaching as supporting and intellectual acts (p. 68).

The occupational level names an activity habitually engaged in. The occupation of school teaching supports many other related activities like committee meetings, classroom maintenance, and hall patrols. Schwab (1978) decries the many “undesirable roles” assigned to teachers by their administrative bodies, including the “police function”, the “giver of tasks”, and the “examiner” (p. 120–21). Similarly the occupations of interpreter, docent and gallery educator encompass many activities. As Randall (1996) notes:

They can feel the public pulse and alert management to strengths and weaknesses of resources allocation, they can handle media relations, negotiations with neighbours, raise funds, entertain important visitors, cultivate “friends groups” and coordinate special events. The difficulty is that interpreters seem to consider everything they do, including education, as interpretation. (p. 7)
Komisar’s (1968) second level, teaching as enterprise, addresses teaching as an activity in which one engages with an intent to produce learning (p. 72). Because it aims to produce particular learning, such teaching lends itself to accountability and efficiency. The results of teaching as an enterprise are more readily tested. What Komisar refers to as the “cousined activities” of teaching as enterprise are indoctrinating, training, propagandizing, preaching, haranguing, inspiriting, persuading, insinuating, deceiving, counselling, and moralizing, among others (p. 73). Komisar refers to teaching as a “characteristically accommodating” act like “living” or “trying” (p. 70). Thus it is open to many interpretations. Yet the question raised by Komisar and one that is particularly useful to my discussion is whether or not the act called teaching is “really” teaching.

Komisar addresses the question of “really” teaching in his third level, teaching as intellectual and supporting acts. These “acts” of teaching differ from teaching as enterprise in that their intent is to produce some form of awareness (p. 79). Through the supporting acts of teaching the teacher puts and keeps the learner in a “perceiving-and-learnable” state and renders the subject matter “teacher-competent” (p. 85). These supporting acts include steps that are intended to contribute to the production of learning, like prompting, cueing, reinforcing, drilling, approving, showing, etc., (p. 75) as well as those steps that are “ego-strengthening” for the learner, like helping to reduce anxiety, alleviate perceptual difficulties, arouse interest, and focus attention (p. 75). As the name suggests, these acts support the intellectual acts of teaching the aim of which is to produce awareness of some point by divulging to the learner not only the intent of the lesson but also the intelligible grounds for the point of the lesson (p. 80). According to Komisar, such intellectual acts include introducing, proving, vindicating, demonstrating, characterizing, interpreting, citing, justifying, indicating, reporting, explicating, instancing, hypothesizing, defining, questioning, conjecturing, appraising, indentifying, contrasting, amplifying, designating, explaining, and comparing (p. 76). The teacher does not have to do all of these acts but may only lead learners through the process (p. 82–83).
Variety rather than uniformity characterizes "act" goals, for example, "get the point, grasp the idea, come to the solution, become aware of the connection, see the larger view" (p. 79). In the criterion that intellectual and supporting acts are intended to secure the awareness of the learner they are opposed to the "cousined acts" of teaching as enterprise. Because intellectual acts of teaching aim to produce awareness rather than particular objects of learning, they are more challenging to evaluate. It is not agreement that is sought, but rather convincing reasons, evidence, justification, and conclusion for the learner’s argument. Thus the learner is afforded greater autonomy than is possible in learning as an enterprise. To teach, as in to carry on a "conversation of instruction," the reasons, evidence, justification, and conclusion which underlie teaching must be clear not only to the learners but also to the teachers (Green 1964, 32; Kilbourn 1982).

Although rarely articulated to the level of the philosophical discussion that has surrounded school teaching, an understanding of the intellectual acts of teaching is implied in the writings of Yellis (1984):

By making clear to our audiences how we do this, what choices we make along the way, and what alternative constructs are available, and, most important, by providing the intellectual tools and raw materials for the visitor to erect his own construct, we will ultimately and inevitably strengthen ourselves as interpreters; our own view of reality, past and present, will be more dimensional and complex. (p. 22)

Vallance (1995) agrees:

Museum educators explicit task is not further to control what people learn but to provide as many avenues to approaching the largely foreign language of art as we can, to guide them to make their own connections and to form their own rewarding categories. Ultimately, visitors may . . . "become their own critics," comfortable with interpreting and analyzing works on different grounds, learning to appreciate them or to dislike them on grounds that include more than recognizability or that they depict agreeable scenes. (p. 7)

Komisar’s (1968) representation of teaching as occupation, enterprise, and act helps not only to make sense of the many ways in which teaching has been interpreted in the museum setting, but also to focus the discussion in this thesis on the intellectual and supporting acts of teaching.
The conceptualization of teaching as intellectual acts that take place in a "conversation of learning" has particular pertinence when the theoretical foundation for teaching practice is a philosophy of learning like that of the community of learners described in Chapter One. As I have previously explained, in a community of learners both the visitors and museum workers are seen as active in structuring the inquiry, with museum staff assuming responsibility for guiding the process and visitors learning to participate in the management of their own learning. In this model, the kinds of learning opportunities that the museum seeks to provide closely resemble the kinds of self-directed learning and development of intelligence that are embedded in skilful teaching practice (Anderson 1997). Through education, experience, and the practice of teaching some museum educators do seem to become "master practitioners" (Tynan 1994) of the practice of learning in the museum setting. They may hold a key to the resources and methodologies of learning from objects, both within and outside the museum.

But these undertakings require a critical, democratic practitioner who regards himself or herself as a learner within a larger learning community of shared knowledge and accumulated wisdom (Anderson 1995, 24; Pointe 1995, 114–7). The processes by which museum teachers help visitors build their own alternative or additional interpretations and confront new questions, problems, and issues ought to mirror as well as inform their own practice (Bown 1987). In order to do this, museum teachers must first have explored their own philosophical, subject-matter, and museum understandings.

Training and Continuing Professional Education in Museum Teaching

The importance of continuing professional education to the exploration of the museum worker's own philosophical, subject-matter, and museum understandings has been emphasized by reports in both the United States and Great Britain, including Open Conversations: Strategies for Professional Development (Blackmon et al. 1988),
Excellence and Equity: Education and the Public Dimension of Museums (AAM Task Force 1991), and A Common Wealth: Museums and Learning in the United Kingdom (Anderson 1997). However, the usefulness of such work for this study is limited by its overall emphasis on the museum professional rather than the museum teacher. While it may be beneficial from an organizational point of view to cast all staff as museum workers, it must still be acknowledged that various professions and disciplines operate within museum settings.

One challenge inherent in this exploration is that museum teaching is not a profession like school teaching. A prospective schoolteacher must meet certain standards agreed upon by the profession and the government, the successful attainment of which is marked by a teaching certificate. The certificate effectively divides the "lifespan learning" (Houle 1980) of the schoolteacher into pre-service training and continuing professional development. There is no such marker in museum teaching. No rite of passage establishes the transition from student museum teacher to full-fledged museum teacher. Rather, it is assumed that museum teachers undergo extensive training and development in order to equip them to teach in their respective institutions. The following description of docent training is worth quoting at length because it so vividly depicts commonly held beliefs about the preparation of museum teachers:

One important feature of the learning process for the docent is the formal training period (often two years in duration) that supports the novice docents as they increasingly understand the activities and goals of other members of the [museum] community, including curators, exhibit designers and educators. Through their interactions with curators, docents become aware of the institution’s collecting and research interests which are reflected in what the museum offers to the public in the form of public exhibits. Through interactions with exhibit designers, they see how the curator’s agendas and insights are translated into exhibits of objects and themes . . . . Through interactions with museum educators and fellow docents, they begin to understand how they can use their own knowledge to transform their own insights about museum practices into an interpretation of museum exhibits for the public. They move, then, from the role of visitor to the role of docent. Ultimately, their goal is to help visitors appreciate the museum’s goals and also begin to participate in the discourse of this museum community. The formal training for novice docents includes meeting established criteria, such as completing formal written exams, and making coherent, interesting, and age-appropriate oral presentations in the
galleries in front of their peers and supervisors. The docents’ most privileged set of interactions, then, is with the visiting public, where they take on the role of teacher. They, thus, assume a dual role within the community, that of learner vis-à-vis the museum staff, and that of teacher vis-à-vis the museum visitor. (Abu-Shumays and Leinhardt 2000, 4)

Do museum teachers believe they learned to teach in this way? Do they see themselves as becoming part of the “museum community”? And furthermore, while all museum staff will be affected by the museum context in which they operate, each appears to have developed a slightly different world view in relation to different communities of practice. As Schon (1987) describes the process of reflective practice,

... our perceptions, appreciations, and beliefs are rooted in the worlds of our own making that we come to accept as reality. Communities of practitioners are continually engaged in what Nelson Goodman calls ‘worldmaking.’ Through countless acts of attention and inattention, naming, sensemaking, boundary setting and control, they make and maintain the worlds matched to their professional knowledge and know-how. They are in transaction with their practice worlds, framing the problems that arise in practice situations and constructing practice situations which make their role-frames operational. They have, in short, a particular, professional way of seeing their world and a way of constructing the world as they see it. When practitioners respond to the indeterminate zones of practice by holding a reflective conversation with the materials of their situations, they remake a part of their practice world and thereby reveal the usually tacit processes of worldmaking that underlie all their practice. (p. 36)

What world may have been formed from the professional knowledge and know-how of museum teachers? In what way does the practice of teaching frame and reframe this world?

Up to this point I have been establishing the context for teaching within the museum setting. Throughout I have been arguing toward the focal point of this inquiry, which is that the museum teacher’s role has not been given the consideration it deserves—even by teachers themselves. One of the critical elements in this context is the prior research on museum teaching. In the next section I shall outline the work that has been done in this area. This will pave the way for articulating more precisely what is missing from the literature and setting out the way I have addressed that gap in the study done for this thesis.
PRIOR RESEARCH ON MUSEUM TEACHING

For years museum educators have struggled with many of the issues I have raised. As I have described in Chapter One, one of the first discussions of museum teaching is found in Gilman’s (1984) 1915 model of the museum’s primary functions—gardant, or keeping, monstrant, or showing, and docent, or teaching. Docent meant teaching that was the “sharpening of the spiritual sight” as opposed to the mere “presentation to the bodily eye” represented by the term monstrant (p. 148). Yet museum teachers seem to have spent little time honing this spiritual sight in the observation of their own practice. By 1969 Zetterberg described museum teaching as “fad-ridden territory” and exhorted museum workers not only to observe others but also to think about and develop their own method of presentation. His description of the range of museum teachers and teaching styles suggests responses to a variety of philosophies of learning that are evident but not articulated by either Zetterberg or the teacher in question:

In practice, the teachers and guides in a museum seem to gravitate toward their own congenial mode of presentation. Some take the public on as apprentices, like a professor in a graduate school who ‘adopts’ graduate students as his own so that they may acquire his knowledge, his skills, his sensitivity, even his philosophy and way of life. Some act as Socratic wise men who get into arguments with the more naive public to elicit generalizations and logic. Some act as chairmen of a town meeting and ensure that each member of the public is heard and that commonly felt problems are resolved. Some act as coaches for an athletic team, squeezing the maximum effort out of their groups by encouragement and cajoling. And some are preachers or lecturers who know the answers and expect the public simply to pay attention and to learn. (1969, 30)

In 1976, almost a decade later, Williams (1984a) attempts to define museum teaching in her seminal article “Teaching or Touring?” In the article she concludes that teaching and touring are “two opposite poles of a continuum of direct services to museum visitors,” (p. 45) placement on which is based upon three criteria: pacing, group participation, and leader skills and preparation. A tour is a “cultural exposure” or an “amusement” (p. 49). Conversely, argues Williams, a teaching experience is an in-depth exploration of museum objects that provides visitors with a deeply involving learning
experience that alters perceptions and substantially adds to their understanding of the nature of being human. She concludes that "professionals teach and volunteers give tours" (p. 48), a conclusion grounded not on the paid or unpaid status of the individual but rather on the time committed to the development of teacher skills and abilities. Skills and abilities ought to be based, she says, on an academic background similar to that of the curators as well as on a knowledge of the learning processes of the visitor (p. 47). On the other hand, a tour guide requires "a great deal of self-control; a calm friendly manner; familiarity with and sensitivity to the audience" (p. 47).

Williams pursued this line of thought in a study carried out at the Denver Art Museum in the mid-1980s. Building on the art connoisseurship work of Gardner, Csikszentmihalyi and Robinson, members of the museum's Interpretive Paradigm Project researched an expert model to help lay visitors have experiences more like those of experts (Williams 1988). Williams, a member of the project, concluded that the aim of a museum was not simply to facilitate the learning desired by the visitor, but also to teach the expertise that the project had identified as important. In order to do this, she enjoined others to "research, to articulate and to teach . . . We need to research—literally to search ourselves again to define the nature of this expertise" (p. 16). In this she differed little from the opinions of Stapp and Yellis discussed in Chapter One. Unlike them, though, she saw this expertise as emanating not from the museum teacher himself or herself but from the curator.

As I have argued above, museum educators need to acknowledge the importance of their own role in the museum curriculum. They need to understand who they are and how they tend to feel about themselves as teachers before they can effectively contribute to the experience of the visitor. Williams' work is important in this regard because she heightened people's awareness of the need to "search ourselves again to define the nature of this expertise." However, like the museum educators on exhibit design teams whom I discussed in Chapter One, she valued the traditional subject matter/milieu expertise of the
curator over that of the teacher. As a result, she did not address how museum teachers learned to teach or what they learned from the experience of teaching.

At the same time and place, however, the experience of teaching was being addressed by the Denver Meeting of Museum Educators (1988). This special interest group of the American Association of Museums argued that, although the ability to teach with objects and a knowledge of both subject matter and the learner were all important, there was no substitute for live teaching in the galleries as a learning experience for the teacher.

Facing real people and trying to help them connect to works of art compel the teacher to plan, try, and alter his or her approaches. Learners’ reactions provide quick feedback. Experience builds quickly as the teacher tries alternative strategies, expands the range of art subjects, and reaches diverse audiences. What does the educator learn from teaching? Teaching in the gallery, in situations where the educator facilitates more thoughtful visitor experiences with works of art, is the most rewarding way to understand the potential and reality of museum education. The essential work of writing labels and gallery guides and of planning other kinds of interpretation is all informed by the experience of live teaching. (Brigham 1988, 9)

In her conclusion Brigham called for more research on teaching in order to empower museum educators and improve gallery teaching. It is precisely these areas I address in my study.

Several attempts have been made to document and classify teaching strategies with an eye to improving gallery or museum teaching (Horn 1984; Wolins et al. 1986; Yenawine 1988; Caston 1989; Grinder and McCoy 1989; Wendling 1991). Caston’s model in particular addresses many of the same elements that I have discussed above—knowledge of the museum, the subject matter, and educational theory. However, she does not address the intellectual process by which these different knowledges are combined and transformed into teaching. Similarly, Grinder and McCoy acknowledge that museums and schools may have different expectations of the tour experience and suggest a “guided discovery” approach that might meet both needs (p. 65–66). Still, theirs is a how-to manual with little consideration or study of how the philosophies behind these expectations may or may not collide in practice. The remaining studies all contribute to a better understanding of teaching
in the museum setting but tend to focus on the observable elements of teaching, ignoring its complexities.

An exception to this vein of research is Lesley Duthie’s study, entitled “What It Means to Be a Docent: Narratives of Art Gallery Experiences” (1990). Duthie utilized Elbaz’s (1981) conceptualization of [school]teachers’ practical knowledge as a framework with which to analyze the body of knowledge that volunteer docents hold about their work and to determine how this knowledge shapes their values and beliefs. Through semistructured interviews she came to believe that docents did hold a coherent body of knowledge, which they saw as emanating from their practice. However, she found that in many cases the docents’ practical knowledge was incompatible with the formal knowledge of the institution. In particular, docent philosophies of art and education that underlay their orientations were not supported by the expressed policies of the institution. Yet until her study, neither the docents nor the institutions seemed aware of these strongly held and conflicting views. In particular, two ideas emerged as to what docents thought the tour should be: (1) an introduction to the gallery, which helps visitors feel comfortable in the unfamiliar environment and encourages them to return, and (2) a demonstration that individual art works are important and that visitors should learn to look at them carefully and to understand them through a process of examination, reflection, and discussion (p. 75). Duthie questioned whether education programs could be well served by such a diverse set of purposes (p. 89). Thus, the role of the docent was seen by her to be “paradoxical and conflicting” for both the institutions and the docent participants (p. 1).

Duthie’s findings are provocative, but to my knowledge there have been no subsequent studies to pursue the question of docent or teacher knowledge and what it may mean for the institution as a whole. Many questions are raised for me by her work: Do her findings apply only to volunteer docents or are they also true of paid museum teachers? Is her study applicable to museum teachers within other discipline-based institutions such as history museums or nature centres or does it apply only to those who work in art
galleries/museums? Significantly, Duthie limited her study to in-depth interviews. Would her findings be any different if combined with actual observation and analysis of teaching practice? Such observation and analysis might show how docents reconcile the aforementioned diverse sets of purposes that Rice (1995) has characterized as the necessary uncertainty of practice of museum education. How do museum teachers actually reason their way through and complete an act of pedagogy?

This last question is an important one, for the wisdom derived from practice may be one key source of teacher knowledge. While this area of research remains relatively untouched in the museum world, there exists a growing body of work on teaching “from the inside” in the field of teacher education (Shulman 1987; Elbaz 1991; Barnes 1992; Kilbourn 1992). Of particular interest to me is Shulman’s concept of “pedagogical content knowledge” (1987) and the process of pedagogical reasoning and action within which such knowledge is used. Because the early development of Shulman’s work was premised on Schwab’s theory of curriculum (Shulman 1984), there is much in common between the two.

PEDAGOGICAL CONTENT KNOWLEDGE

Shulman (1987) argues that two areas must be examined. The first area is the sources of the knowledge base— the domains of scholarship and experience from which teachers draw knowledge. The second area is the processes of pedagogical reasoning and actions within which the teacher knowledge is used. As I have noted above, Shulman maintains that the knowledge base of teachers is generally considered to be the observable acts of teaching. This misconception, he maintains, is exacerbated by the policy community at large, which continues to hold that the skills needed for teaching are those identified in empirical research on teaching effectiveness. The critical features of teaching are often disregarded in order that general principles of effective teaching may be identified and translated into general competencies for the profession as a whole (p. 6).
In order to establish his view of teaching, Shulman identifies the "commonplaces of teaching" as

- A teacher knows something not understood by others, presumably students.
- A teacher can transform understandings, performance skills, or desired attitudes and values into pedagogical representations and actions.
- Teaching begins with the teacher’s understanding of what is to be learned and how it is to be taught.
- Teaching ends with new comprehensions by both the teacher and the student. (p. 8)

To accomplish these things, the teacher must have access to a knowledge base, the categories of which are

- content knowledge;
- general pedagogical knowledge, with special reference to those broad principles and strategies of classroom management & organization . . . ;
- curriculum knowledge, with particular grasp of the materials and programs that serve as the "tools of the trade" for teachers;
- pedagogical content knowledge, that special amalgam of content and pedagogy that is uniquely the province of teachers, their own special form of professional understanding;
- knowledge of learners and their characteristics;
- knowledge of educational contexts, ranging from the workings of the group or classroom, the governance and financing of school districts, to the character of communities and cultures; and
- knowledge of educational ends, purposes, and values, and their philosophical and historical grounds (p. 8)

Of these, Shulman considers pedagogical content knowledge to be the category most likely to distinguish the content specialist from the pedagogue. It represents "the blending of content and pedagogy into an understanding of how particular topics, problems, or issues are organized, represented, and adapted to the diverse interests and abilities of learners and presented for instruction" (p. 8).

Shulman hypothesizes that the sources of these knowledge bases may be found in four main areas that may be likened to Schwab’s (1968) four curricular commonplaces of subject matter, milieu, learner and learning, and teachers and teaching. Shulman’s areas are: (1) scholarship in content disciplines, (2) educational materials and structures, (3)
formal educational scholarship, and (4) the wisdom of practice. To elaborate on each of
Shulman’s bases further, first, by scholarship in content disciplines he refers to the
knowledge, understanding, skill, and disposition to be learned in, for example, art,
history, or science. The teacher must know the structures, the principles of conceptual
organization and the principles of inquiry for the discipline (p. 9).

Second, in Shulman’s estimation, the teacher must “know the territory” of his or
her teaching—the materials, institutions, organizations, and mechanisms that form not only
the “tools of the trade” but also the context for the teaching (p. 10). Third, the teacher needs
a familiarity with the philosophical, critical, and empirical literature that informs the goals,
visions, and dreams of teachers in addition to the empirical study of teaching effectiveness
that provides general teaching principles. And finally, the teacher needs to know the
“wisdom of practice” (p. 9). These are the principles that guide the practices of able
teachers (p. 11). Hein (1998), writing from a museum-based perspective rather than
Shulman’s school-based one, similarly theorizes that any adequate educational theory must
accommodate a theory of knowledge, a theory of learning, and a pedagogical theory (p.
36). But Hein’s model does not address the blending of pedagogy and content critical to
Shulman’s concept which I will now discuss in more detail.

This brings us to the second area of examination—the processes of pedagogical
reasoning and actions within which the museum teacher’s knowledge is used. Shulman
(1987) reasons that all teaching begins with some form of text, piece of material, set of
values, or needs with which the teacher is presented and challenged to take what he or she
already understands and make it ready for effective instruction. Pedagogical reasoning then
involves a cycle through the activities of comprehension, transformation, instruction,
evaluation, reflection, and new comprehensions, although not necessarily in that order (p.
14).

Shulman acknowledges that the direction and sequence of the aspects of
pedagogical reasoning may be markedly different from that represented by his model. For
example, he describes a case in which students themselves initiate the process by "discovering, inventing, or inquiring, to prepare their own representations and transformations". In this instance, the teacher must possess the ability to comprehend and the capacity of transformation, but may apply it only as the means to "respond, judge, nurture and provoke student creativity". The teacher's role becomes one of "sympathetic transformation and interpretation" (p. 14).

According to Shulman, the key to the development of pedagogical content knowledge lies in the transformation of the content into active teaching. Pedagogical content knowledge is "the capacity of the teacher to transform the content knowledge he or she possesses into forms that are pedagogically powerful and yet adaptive to the variations in ability and background presented by the students" (Shulman 1987, 15). The following table summarizes the different steps in the process:
### Table 1: Shulman’s Model of Pedagogical Reasoning and Action

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Comprehension</strong></th>
<th>Of purposes, subject matter structures, ideas within and outside the discipline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Transformation</strong></td>
<td>Preparation: critical interpretation and analysis of texts, structuring and segmenting, development of a curricular repertoire, and clarification of purposes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Representation: use of a representational repertoire which includes analogies, metaphors, examples, demonstrations, explanations and so forth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Selection: choice from among an instructional repertoire which includes modes of teaching, organizing, managing, and arranging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Adaptation and Tailoring to Student Characteristics: consideration of conceptions, preconceptions, misconceptions, and difficulties, language, culture, and motivations, social class, gender, age, ability, aptitude, interests, self-concepts, and attention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Instruction</strong></td>
<td>Management, presentations, interactions, group work, discipline, humour, questioning and other aspects of active teaching, discovery or inquiry instruction, and the observable forms of classroom teaching.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Evaluation</strong></td>
<td>Checking for student understanding during interactive teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Testing student understanding at the end of lessons or units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Evaluating one’s own performance, and adjusting for experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reflection</strong></td>
<td>Reviewing, reconstructing, re-enacting and critically analyzing one’s own and the class’s performance, and grounding explanations in evidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>New Comprehensions</strong></td>
<td>Of purposes, subject matter, students, teaching, and self</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Consolidation of new understandings, and learning from experience</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Shulman 1987, 15
THE ART OF TEACHING

According to Shulman (1987), reflection is essential to new comprehensions and subsequent changes in practice:

[Reflection] is what a teacher does when he or she looks back at the teaching and learning that has occurred, and reconstructs, re-enacts, and/or recaptures the events, the emotions, and the accomplishments. It is that set of processes through which a professional learns from experience. It can be done alone or in concert, with the help of recording devices or solely through memory . . . . Central to this process will be a review of the teaching in comparison to the ends sought. (p. 19)

Yet this description may be too general to be helpful in working with museum teachers. In Shulman’s model knowledge and experience are separated as though there is nothing in knowledge that influences having an experience. Munby and Russell (1992) argue that Schön’s notion of framing and reframing is a central feature of learning from experience to develop pedagogical content knowledge (p. 106). In the next section I explore further the notion of frames as it applies to teaching in the museum.

Frames

Schön (1987) argues that problems in everyday life do not present themselves in well-formed structures. Thus one of the key steps to solving such a puzzle is to choose and name the things to which we will attend. The practitioner must construct the problem using the materials of the situation. Depending on, among other things, our disciplinary backgrounds, organizational roles, past histories, and political/economic perspectives, we frame things differently. We not only pay attention to different facts but we make sense of them differently in order to make a problem that we can solve (p. 4–5). Barnes (1992) has described a frame as a “clustered set of standard expectations through which all adults organize, not only their knowledge of the world, but their behaviour in it” (p. 16). This set
of standard expectations or frame organizes not only teachers' knowledge of the world but also their behaviour in it (p. 16).

Experienced teachers have several frames from which to choose that incorporate different perspectives on several knowledge bases (Schön 1983, 165). They are able not only to reflect critically upon the principles underlying their work but also to switch from one interpretive frame to another in making decisions about teaching (Barnes 1992, 30). One frame allows for only one response. However, the ability to view a problem through several frames presents the potential for conflicts amongst different values. These are what Schön (1987) terms the "indeterminate zones of practice" (p. 6). This uncertainty, uniqueness, and value conflict are central to any professional practice. In order to perform, the practitioner or, in this case, the teacher, must reconcile, integrate, or choose amongst these frames. The artistry of practice lies in the ability to do this, hypothesizes Schön, as exemplified by the arts of problem framing, implementation and improvisation (p. 13).

Artistic Practice

The artistry of practice in teaching has been defined and studied from different perspectives. As Schwab (1983) writes:

\[ \ldots \text{every art, whether it be teaching, stone carving or judicial control of a court of law. Every art has rules but knowledge of the rules does not make one an artist. Art arises as the knower of the rules learns to apply them appropriately to the particular case. Application, in turn, requires acute awareness of the particularities of the case and ways in which the rules can be modified to fit the case without complete abrogation of the rule. In art, the form must be adapted to the matter. Hence the form must be communicated in ways which illuminate its possibilities for modification.} \]

(n. 2, p. 265)

Eisner (1985) comments that it is the "common function of the aesthetic \ldots to modulate form so that it can, in turn, modulate our experience," but in order to do this the viewer must be able to perceive the qualities of the form (p. 25). He argues

\[ \text{Perception manifests itself in experience and is a function of the transactions between the qualities of the environment and what we bring to those qualities. The character of that experience is in large measure influenced by} \]
our ability to differentiate among the qualities we attend to... [The] ability to make fine-grained discriminations among complex and subtle qualities is an instance of what I have called connoisseurship. (Eisner 1991, 63)

A critique of the “pedagogical dimension” of a tour or program addresses the qualities of teaching that elude standardized observations and achievement studies. The form of a critique allows the critic to focus not only on the teacher’s aims but also on the context of the teaching (p. 77). Thus the “trade-offs” that are a natural product of teaching are seen within the context in which they are made. Furthermore, Eisner argues, if teaching is indeed an art, then excellence could be of many kinds. There may be “genres” of teaching just as there are genres of painting (p. 78). There may be genres of performance like the lecture, the small group discussion, or the experiment (p. 79). And this implies that each teacher has a “personal signature” or style (p. 79). A teacher’s style is a compendium of decisions made (Jarvis 1992, 240). Therefore the “task in coaching teachers is not to try to transform the pedagogical signature of a teacher into another form, but to help the teacher develop the strengths that ‘come naturally’” (Eisner 1985, 79). In this way Kilbourn (1998) examined the aesthetic qualities of his own teaching practice in order to address the complexity of teaching, identifying the principles of situation, integration and proportion as important to his work (p. 49). Kilbourn not only perceived the qualities of his work but, in writing about them, he performed an act of criticism that illuminated, interpreted, and appraised those qualities. Thus the reconstruction of his own teaching opened his work up to alternative interpretations (Eisner 1991, 85–86).

This aesthetic approach is evident in the work of some art museum educators, but as a way to approach the visual arts rather than as an approach to their own teaching practice. For example, Vallance (1995) asserts that the task of the art museum educator is “to provide as many avenues to approaching the largely foreign language of art as we can, to guide them to make their own connections, and to form their own rewarding categories” (p. 7). Her goal is not only to help visitors “become their own critics” (p. 7) but also to
develop “well-educated listeners and a well-educated citizenry, able to analyze arguments, see connections, make responsible interpretations and decisions about the world” (p. 13).

Nothing comparable has been done on the art or aesthetic of museum teaching, although its importance has been noted:

The key point we discovered is that a museum . . . is both a culture and the representation of a culture. In developing our programs, we needed to understand how a professional world like our own operates—what is its own range of skills, its aesthetics and politics, traditions and innovations . . . Too often museums view themselves as mere technicians, as professional transmitters of other realities, rather than as artists, as actors, as prisms through which the past, or the exotic, or the mysterious, is illuminated in our own day. (Rabinowitz 1996)

In the field of interpretation, one of Tilden’s (1967) tenets was “Interpretation is an art, which combines many arts, whether the materials presented are scientific, historical or architectural” (p. 26). Lewis further suggested that “if interpretation is an art, perhaps it should be reviewed just as plays and paintings are” (Regnier et al. 1992, 91), but little of substance has emerged from this idea to date. Do museum teachers consider their work in an aesthetic manner? Kilbourn identified as important to his work the aesthetic principles of situation, integration, and proportion. What qualities do museum teachers consider to be important with regard to their teaching? And, finally, is it possible to present a tour or program in “ways that illuminate its form”?

Returning to the question of education and interpretation, the challenge of museum education is to address both educational and recreational goals. Implicit in the museum teacher’s teaching is an approach not only to the subject matter of the lesson but also to the museum itself. The museum teacher is at once a learner/visitor and a teacher in the museum. It is presumed that he or she is museum literate in the sense of Stapp’s (1984) definition, “mastery of the language of museum objects and familiarity with the museum as an institution” (p. 3). Are museum teachers aware of the qualities of the museum? What are the qualities of the museum to which museum teachers attend? Do these qualities shape their practice? If they are able to perceive these qualities, are they then able to act as critics for the museum’s visitors by illuminating, interpreting and appraising the museum itself?
SUMMARY

The present study has been undertaken to explore the following questions that were raised for me in the process of my work and research, and which have been advanced in the foregoing chapters:

*The Curriculum-Making Process*

- How do museum teachers—those charged with face-to-face education and interpretation—describe, understand, and evaluate the success of their roles in the museum, art gallery, and nature centre? Do the terms *education* and *interpretation* and the *docent function* have meaning for museum teachers? If so, what does this mean for the practice of teaching in the museum setting?

*Milieu*

- How do museum teachers themselves understand the milieu in which and about which they teach? If museum teachers are unable to perceive the gestalt of the situation—the interactive experience—what then do they think they are teaching? Are they fully open to the possibilities of the museum?

- Are museum teachers aware of the external issues affecting museums within which they teach? If so, does this awareness affect their teaching?

*Subject Matter*

- By seeking to identify themselves as educators first and subject-matter specialists second, have museum educators discounted the importance
of understanding the different patterns and structures of knowledge that underpin the museum milieu?

- Do museum teachers share the concept of museum literacy? Do they utilize it in their work?

_Learners and Learning_

- Are museum teachers aware of the philosophical issues surrounding learners and learning in the museum? What are their theories of learning, implicit and explicit? How do they make use of them in their teaching?

_Teachers and Teaching_

- What do museum teachers call themselves? What effect, if any, does this have upon their teaching?

- What “world” may have been formed from the professional knowledge and know-how of museum teachers? In what way does the practice of teaching frame and reframe this world?

_The Art of Teaching_

- Do museum teachers consider their work in an aesthetic manner? If so, what qualities do museum teachers consider to be important with regard to their teaching? What are the qualities of the museum to which museum teachers attend? Do these qualities shape their practice? If they are able to perceive these qualities, are they then able to act as “critics” for the museum’s visitors by illuminating, interpreting and appraising the museum itself?
To focus further discussions, I have distilled these into the following four questions, which form the basis for my research:

- What do museum teachers know?
- How do museum teachers conceptualize teaching in the museum?
- What reasoning lies behind museum teaching?
- How do museum teachers believe they learn to teach in the museum, gallery, or nature centre?

As demonstrated by the review of the literature, despite ongoing interest and repeated calls for research, little work has been done to document and analyze the nature and experience of teaching from the perspective of the museum teacher. Yet the need for such work is particularly pressing in light of the rapid change being experienced by the museum world as a whole. As I have tried to establish, the museum curriculum is beset by elements of controversy and confusion, and this is especially true of the museum teacher. The potential of this role cannot be fulfilled without a better understanding of museum teaching and what it means to be a teacher in the museum.
CHAPTER THREE

METODOLOGY

THEORETICAL APPROACH

The research questions I have posed in Chapters One and Two are premised upon the conviction, as Eisner says, that it is “more important to understand what people experience than to focus simply on what they do” (Connelly and Clandinin 1988, ix). Accordingly I have used an interpretive methodology that is typically “concerned with the specifics of meaning and action in social life that takes place in the concrete scenes of face-to-face interaction, and that takes place in the wider society surrounding the scene of action” (Erickson 1986, 156). This is warranted by the needs, first, to make visible the everyday acts of museum teaching; second, to develop a specific understanding by documenting concrete details of teaching practice; and third, to consider the local meanings that teaching/learning events may have for the people involved in them.

Through interpretive research, with its focus on sense-making, it is possible to explore and develop a tentative understanding of the museum and of the broader social context within which teaching occurs from the meaning-perspective of the teachers themselves. From this emerges not abstract generalizations about museum teaching and teachers, but a better understanding of their “lived experiences.” By seeking to capture the core of these meanings and contradictions in one set of circumstances, such studies as mine build upon one another and may eventually allow for a broader comparative understanding of teaching and learning within non-school settings.
My study is framed by Shulman's (1987) construct of pedagogical content knowledge, which I described in greater detail in the previous chapter. I was interested in exploring what experienced museum teachers know and how they reason their way through and complete an act of pedagogy. The study is also framed by the choice of my research methodology—a multi-site case study. A case study offers the potential for an “intensive, holistic description and analysis of a bounded phenomenon” (Merriam 1998, xiii). The precision, validity and stability of findings are strengthened by the exploration of more than one case. Multiple-site studies help to ground each case by providing a broader context for understanding how, where, and why individual teachers experience their practice (Merriam 1998, 40–42). Through such intensive study I hoped to come to terms with at least some of the properties of teaching in non-school settings as the beginning of a larger effort to collect, collate, and interpret the practical knowledge of museum teachers. The accumulation of such studies contributes to the establishment of a history of practice—a case literature—to allow for the classification of the “principles, precedents and parables” (Shulman 1987, 12) of teaching in non-school settings.

SPECIFIC METHODS

Researcher as Instrument

One of the tenets of qualitative research is that much of the “sense-making” takes place in the mind, body, and soul of the researcher as data is mediated through the researcher herself (Merriam 1998, 7). My assumptions, worldview and perceptions become the source of unavoidable bias in research design, data collection, analysis and reporting. Therefore, to use rather than abuse this bias, I must acknowledge my own construction of reality (Glesne and Peshkin 1992; Merriam 1998).
As I have outlined in Chapter One, the origins of this study lie in my observation—and frustration—that those who actively engage in face-to-face teaching in museum and gallery settings are frequently the least valued members of the staff, whether paid or volunteer. This has been exacerbated by the increasing separation of museum teachers, those who provide teaching services, from museum educators or those who plan and develop the programs and tours offered in these settings. In my own career, I have moved from face-to-face teaching toward more administrative and facilitative work, having been successively a costumed interpreter at a large historic site, the curator of a community museum, a museum education student, the curator of an historic house, a museum education consultant and trainer, and once more a student. These experiences contributed to the personal orientation or subjectivity which is the basis for the story I am able to tell here. Yet I recognize that such subjectivity may be dangerous if it blinds the researcher to those things which do not "fit," if it presses one to follow only those avenues that reinforce rather than challenge. Glesne and Peshkin (1992) describe a process of identifying a set of "I's" as a framework for identifying one’s own subjectivity (p. 104). While I have many such "I’s," those that I feel have most affected my work are the "museum-educator-as-generalist I" and the "boss I."

As I have already discussed the "museum-educator-as-generalist I" at some length in Chapter One, suffice it to say that at the beginning of this study I believed that the museum, broadly defined to include a great variety of settings, was a unique "situation" and that there was a need for the museum educator to be a generalist (Stapp 1996). The second subjective self is the "boss I." As both a supervisor and, later, the trainer of an increasingly large number of interpreters, docents, and guides, I focused on training in terms of the dictionary definition, which is "to bring (person, child, animal) to a desired state or standard of efficiency, etc. by instruction and practice." My first instinct was to evaluate people in terms of their competency rather than to try to understand what it was they were trying to do and why, as I have outlined in my study. This subjective ‘boss-I’
was in evidence when I first came to the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education in 1994 and professed interest in “master teachers” and “master teaching” within the museum.

I find that in the intervening years my interests have shifted, perhaps “refocused” is a better word. I have become less interested in the ideas of master teaching and of only museum volunteers as teachers/learners and more interested in a more broadly humanistic approach that sees education as a “human encounter whose aim is the development of the unique potential of each individual” (Carr and Kemmis 1989, 24). I now believe, as I have outlined at the beginning of this chapter, that education is a process and the museum, gallery, or park is a “lived experience” from which knowledge may be gained and conceptualized.

Connelly and Clandinin (1988) refer to this process as a “curriculum of experience”. In it, curriculum itself is pictured as something experienced in “situations” composed of “persons, in an immediate environment of things, interacting according to certain processes” (p. 6) who by their actions shape the future and by their stories shape the past. “Where we have been and where we are going interact to make meaning of the situations in which we find ourselves” (p. 9). For me, the importance of this conception is that it does not end with reflection on personal experience. It is incomplete without similar reflection upon personal philosophy, the underlying beliefs and values which contextualize our experience, and curriculum theory. By consciously recovering these different texts the teacher is able to reconstruct her knowledge of experience and theory into a new, more productive, reflexive relationship (p. 87). Through such a dialectic view, knowledge is made personal (p. 96).

At the time of the study I was involved with the design, preparation, and implementation of the Docent Orientation Program of a large art gallery in the Toronto area. Working with the education staff of this institution as well as with the beginning docents allowed me to experience life within an art-based setting and to test and apply different ideas and approaches as they emerged from the data.
Research Design

Robert Stake (1995) talks about the importance of establishing the "boundaries" of the case study and what will define a case. In my inquiry, these case boundaries underwent a metamorphosis as I entered into the data analysis stage that I will now discuss. Miles and Huberman (1994) graphically depict the case study as a heart within a circle, the heart being the focus and the circle defining the boundaries of the study. Using this metaphor, I originally visualized my inquiry as one circle representing the museum since the museum as a generic institution was a "bounded phenomenon" (Merriam 1998, xiii). The heart within the circle represented the teacher-participants who were to be the focus of the study. In order to strengthen the precision and validity of the study and the stability of my findings, I determined to use three "museums" in a multi-site case study. Returning to the circle/heart metaphor, visualize the original design of my study as three circles superimposed upon one another, all bounding a small number of teacher-participants.

![Figure 1: Original representation of case studies.](image)

SITE SELECTION

I determined to use a form of "purposeful sampling" in order to choose cases from which I felt the most could be learned (Patton 1990, 159). Since I had resolved that each institution would constitute a case, it was first necessary to gain access at the institutional level. The criteria I established for selection were: the representation of three different discipline bases
(i.e., science, art, history); the existence of an active teaching program in the galleries; experienced and thoughtful museum teachers; and the willingness of the institution to participate, as indicated by senior staff. The nature of the research techniques that I chose required a long-term commitment on my part, so sites also had to be within commuting distance of Toronto. I purposely excluded from the selection process “living history” sites such as pioneer villages, forts, and historic houses in which museum teachers may wear costume and re-enact the daily life of the past. This was done for two reasons. First, the element of drama purposefully introduced through costume and play-acting made the museum curriculum even more complex and therefore difficult for me to study and analyze. The discipline base of history could, I felt, be observed just as well in a community history museum. Secondly, I had conducted an earlier pilot study in an historic fort setting and already had those findings with which to inform this present study (Castle 1995).

I then used my existing network of museum, gallery and park contacts within the metropolitan area to create a short list of possible sites. I made use of recent literature in the field of museum/gallery education and park interpretation and also approached key informants such as provincial museums advisors for references to particularly active sites. Contacts with the art gallery and the nature centre featured in the study were made through those avenues. Finally, I posted a notice on the listserv of the provincial museum association, explaining my topic, listing my criteria, and asking for expressions of interest. The response I received was from a contact at the community history museum that ultimately participated in the study.

Initial contact at all sites was with those who held the positions of education coordinator or head of education at their sites. Their interest in and willingness to support my research was secured at the time I was writing my research proposal in early 1997. As I undertook to begin my research at each of the sites in 1997–98, I also secured written consent from a person in a position of signing authority (see Appendix 1: Administrative Consent Form). The administrative consent form outlined the purpose of the study, the
research questions, criteria for approaching that site, the potential value of the study to the site, my methodology, the selection of study participants, and my approach to the data analysis. Particularly important, however, were the assurances I offered of anonymity and confidentiality, to the extent that all proper names and identifying details relating to the site, the museum teachers, and the visitors would be altered in the field notes, journal copies, interview transcripts, and interpretive accounts. In accordance with this agreement, I refer to the three sites by the generic names of the Country Art Gallery, the Nature Centre and the Community History Museum. While it is impossible to completely obscure the identity of the sites, details about each site are provided only as a descriptive context for the work of the individual teacher-participants. Co-workers and visitors are referred to by titles alone, for example, Education Coordinator, Student, or Adult. Furthermore, in order to protect teacher-participants from the possibility of evaluation as a result of this inquiry, site representatives agreed that they would not have access to field notes, journal copies, interview transcripts, or other working papers. Only a copy of the completed thesis will be deposited at each site.

The overall timing of the research was determined in part through discussion with the education coordinator or equivalent at each site and in part by the exigencies of my own timetable. The school year, September to June, offered the greatest number of tours and therefore the easiest access to interpreters, docents, and gallery educators who are contracted on a paid or volunteer basis to provide tours as needed. I had already decided that a period of approximately three months at each site in turn, working with two teacher-participants, would provide me with “information-rich cases” (Merriam 1998, 61). As well, I was interested in concentrating on one site at a time in order to achieve a kind of immersion experience. I coupled this with information from the education coordinators as to the ebb and flow of tours at their particular sites to produce my original schedule:

- September–November: the Nature Centre
- December–February: the Community History Museum
- March–May: the Country Art Gallery
While all sites offered a selection of tours for a range of ages and interests, my decision to observe during the school year determined that the study would be dominated by tours offered to student groups. Nevertheless, as much as possible I chose to observe and document the mixture of tour types encountered by the teacher-participants during the course of the study, seeing this as a representation of the overall nature and experience of teaching in museums from their perspectives.

Selection of Teacher-Participants

The teacher-participants self-selected. However, the criteria that I established to enable their process of selection was that they ought to consider themselves to be accomplished museum teachers, willing and able to reflect upon their teaching experiences at the site, who conducted tours on a regular basis, and who were willing to commit a significant amount of time and energy to this project (See Appendix 2: Staff Introduction). The manner by which teacher-participants were made aware of and chose to become a part of my study changed as I moved from one site to the next, in response to the needs of the particular site and as a result of my own expanded knowledge of the process. My intention was to present the research proposal at a staff meeting, answer questions, and invite private responses. At the first site, the Nature Centre, there was no staff meeting to attend so instead I asked the Education Coordinator to distribute a one-page letter outlining my study and inviting teachers to consider taking part. Having received no response after several weeks, I again approached the Education Coordinator and asked her for the names of museum teachers whom she felt might meet the criteria for teacher-participants. She offered the names of several people of whom I observed tours with two. Having observed their tours, I subsequently approached these two about participating in the study. They accepted and I gave them the pseudonyms “Dwight” and “Alice.” I was approached by a third museum
teacher after I had begun work with Dwight and Alice, but declined her offer to participate because of my original criterion of only two teacher-participants per site.

At the second site, the Community History Museum, I was invited to attend a staff meeting, provide the Staff Introduction hand-out, discuss my project, and invite responses. Here I received three offers of interest. I gave them the pseudonyms “Jennifer,” “Gord,” and “Helen.” While I had intended to work with only two teacher-participants at each site, it became clear that the numbers of tours that each teacher-participant conducted at the Community History Museum might provide insufficient data for my study. In consultation with my thesis committee, I decided that observation of ten tours at each site, rather than five to ten tours with each teacher-participant, would provide adequate redundancy (Merriam 1998, 64).

Finally, at the Country Art Gallery, I was again invited to attend a staff meeting to present and ask for expressions of interest. This became slightly problematic, as I came to understand that there were three separate groups of museum teachers at the gallery: paid educators, volunteer docents (weekday) and volunteer docents (weekend). Having realized this, I decided that it was important from the perspective of my study to research the “lived experience” of these different groups within the same institution. I was particularly interested in exploring the perceptions of volunteer docents to see how they compared with similar, earlier studies done with volunteer docents. As well, the third group, volunteer docents (weekend), offered the chance to observe more tours with non-school audiences. Accordingly, I attended three staff meetings at this site, presented, discussed, and was very fortunate to receive an offer to participate from one person in each of the three groups. I gave them the pseudonyms “Joan,” “Walter,” and “Bern.”

To summarize briefly, of the participants four were men and four women. Seven were Canadian-born and one was born in South Africa. The four men were all older, retired schoolteachers. The women were younger and had entered museum teaching either as a career in itself or as a step toward a new, related career like school teaching. Only
Walter and Bern taught on a volunteer basis; the remaining members of the group were all contract paid staff members who were called in on an as-needed basis to teach tours or programs. I will present their individual stories in Chapter Four.

**Ethics and Vulnerability**

As Erickson (1986) notes, two basic ethical principles apply:

Those studied, especially those studied as focal research subjects, need to be (a) as informed as possible of the purposes and activities of research that will occur and, if any burdens (additional work load) or risks that may be entailed for them by being studied. Focal research subjects need also to be (b) protected as much as possible from risks. (p. 141)

The “researcher/other” relationship is the crux of principled research practice. From the first day of the study I endeavoured to create conditions of “high trust and rapport” (p. 142) within which teacher-participants would feel both informed and protected. This was not a high-risk study but, as Erickson points out, embarrassment as well as liability to administrative sanction can be considered psychological and social risks, which may greatly affect the participant. There is also the very real shock of reading representations of self in the raw data and the interpretive accounts. There are always discrepancies between what people think they are doing, what they say they are doing, what they appear to others to be doing, and what they are doing. Resolving these discrepancies threatens to create dissonances, both personal and political (Merriam 1998, 43).

Before beginning my research I first met individually with each of the teacher-participants to explain as fully as possible the purpose of my work and my expectations of him or her. At that point each was also able to express any concerns he or she might have about the project and its effects. In one case (Wait), I negotiated with the teacher-participant to exclude the teaching journal from my expectations. Each teacher-participant then completed and signed a participant consent form (see Appendix 3: Participant Consent Form). As with the administrative consent form, this form outlined the purpose of the study, research questions, criteria for approaching the site and the teacher-participant,
potential benefits of the research for the participant, and my methodology and approach to data analysis. Teacher-participants were also informed of my attempts to ensure their anonymity and confidentiality through the use of pseudonyms and masking of identifying details about the site. Later this proved difficult as the rich detail so necessary to qualitative research meant that the sites were easily identifiable from descriptions of their characteristics and locations (Glesne and Peshkin 1992, 118). To address this, I worked closely with teacher-participants throughout the process and assured them of their right to withdraw at any stage of the research.

Despite these promises, the teacher-participants still expressed some concerns. Most felt mild discomfort with what they perceived to be the unflattering representation of speech patterns in the interview transcripts—the characteristics of oral speech that a teacher-participant would not use in writing (Seidman 1998, 104).

... I don’t know how you managed to decipher any information from my interview. My dialogue seemed so disjointed. I’m hoping this is typical of all responses and not an indication of how I speak. (Jennifer’s response to Int-HMJ2)

One of the teacher-participants was worried that my research would constitute an evaluation of her teaching practice that might be used by others in positions of authority over her:

HELEN: ... I had a question before but it’s irrelevant now because I’ve accepted at [name of a faculty of education]. But before I’d sent in the teachers’ college—when the applications were in holding—I’m thinking, “Well, geez, if you evaluate me poorly, is this going to get back to anybody in the faculty?”

I.: Oh, no, no, no.

HELEN: But I mean it’s irrelevant because I chose [name of a faculty of education] anyway.

I.: No. And this isn’t an evaluation. And also you have a pseudonym, so nobody knows who you are.

HELEN: But part of me was just thinking, “What if she goes back and compares notes? ‘Oh this woman just doesn’t know what she’s doing! Oh, gee, by the way, she’s on your list!’” [laughs]

I.: No. No, that would be unethical.
HELEN: I figured it was, but it was something that I had meant to ask you before. (Int-HMH1, 1222-36)

Subjectivity and Rapport

Lofland and Lofland (1995), in their discussion of “getting along” in the field, address three tasks. One is getting along with conscience and colleagues, or the questions of ethics and vulnerability that I have just discussed. The other two are getting along with self and getting along with members or participants (p. 46). These questions of subjectivity and rapport will now be addressed.

As I have explored in the section above entitled “Researcher as Instrument,” throughout the inquiry I worked to get in touch with my “embodied self” (Glesne and Peshkin 1992, 106) and thereby to develop a level of what Heshusius (1994) has called “participatory consciousness” (p. 19). However, I came to recognize that I could not dissolve myself in the eyes of the participants. With eight teacher-participants at three separate sites, there were differences among us of race and ethnicity, gender, age, and status. I could not become them nor they me; instead, I had to recognize and cope with our differences. Of course, these varied from person to person and I will address them in more detail below as I present the “mini-case” of each teacher-participant. However, the “stance” (Lofland and Lofland 1995, 54) that I ultimately adopted was one that drew upon my own spectrum of experiences as a museum teacher, as an evaluator of museum teachers, and as a teacher of museum teachers. I was interviewing people with whom I deeply sympathized, who seemed to trust me, and who wanted to talk about the issue at hand. However, while I had “been there” in some respects, it would have been arrogant for me to presume that I knew how they felt.

How the participant views the researcher is also an important factor in the success of the relationship. The roles of the researcher (Glesne and Peshkin, 112-17) are not determined by the researcher alone. In each of the cases, the teacher-participant and I
established and developed a different and unique relationship based on a number of factors. These tentative relationships ranged from mentor, friend, and listener to evaluator. In establishing these relationships, my problem became one of maintaining the distance to explore, rather than share, assumptions (Merriam 1998, 87). I tried to assume an air of "acceptable incompetence" (Lofland and Lofland 1995, 56), despite having used my status as an experienced museum worker to gain entry into the sites.

DATA COLLECTION

Research Techniques

Because I was interested in the meaning constructed by museum teachers themselves, I chose to use the techniques of in-depth interview, participant observation, and, to a more limited extent, document analysis (Merriam 1998, 14). I also asked teacher-participants to keep an ongoing journal account of their teaching and their thoughts about teaching, to share with me (see Appendix 3: Participant Consent Form). However, this was passively resisted and, once in the field, I abandoned the idea in favour of written and oral comments on the transcripts of tours and interviews that I prepared and shared with each teacher-participant.

PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION

I decided upon a form of participant observation in which my activities were known to the teacher-participants and to the groups they led. However, my participation was limited and was secondary to my role as an information gatherer. The unit I chose to observe was a complete guided tour or program as conducted by the teacher-participant because this was the most readily observable "act of teaching" undertaken by them. There is no agreement as to what actually constitutes a museum "tour" (Williams 1984a; Grinder and McCoy 1989;
Pond 1993); however, museums and galleries regularly assign this title to a formal, structured activity with an educational intent, guided by a museum teacher and usually lasting from one to two hours.

While I had first intended to observe between five and ten tours/programs with each teacher-participant, as the study evolved and more people took part, this became increasingly difficult to schedule and manage. Instead I chose to observe ten tours/programs at each site, recognizing that each site rather than each teacher-participant constituted a “case”. In all I observed thirty tours/programs, each approximately one and one-half to three hours long. Each observation was coded by institution and teacher-participant and entered into an ongoing project log (see Appendix 4: Project Log).

Arrangements to observe/participate were made directly with each teacher-participant. The choice of tour/program depended more on our schedules than on attempts to observe representative samples of the types of tours/program they presented or the audiences with whom they worked. In some cases, teacher-participants wanted me to see a tour/program that they felt was particularly effective; in other cases, to vary the experience, I chose to follow a tour/program in which they worked with a different audience group.

For each observation/participation, I recorded extensive field notes and sketches in a bound journal. Field notes included observation and discussion beginning up to thirty minutes before the tour/program, a record of all activity and interaction during the tour/program, and a short debriefing with the teacher-participant afterward, if at all possible. I decided against the use of audio or videotape as a method of recording the tour, for two reasons. First, I felt that any such recording would infringe on the right to privacy of all those participating in the tour, ranging from young children to older adults, because it would not be possible to obtain informed consent from the fifteen to thirty participants in a tour. Second, I found rewarding the early focus on the acts of teaching that was demanded by having to record field notes.
Within a week to ten days of most observations I transcribed the field notes using a qualitative analysis computer program, NUD*IST. Observer comments and questions that had occurred to me either in the course of the tour/program or during the transcription process were included. The transcription was then shared with the teacher-participant, who was asked to make any necessary corrections and to respond in writing to the observer comments as s/he deemed appropriate. The response at this step varied greatly. Some teacher-participants chose simply to approve the transcript, signing and dating it, whereas others chose to write extensive marginal notes. These teacher-participant comments were then entered into the transcription, dated, and noted as "text-inserts".

INTERVIEWS

The second focal point of my research was two in-depth interviews conducted with each of the teacher-participants. This structure was based on Seidman's (1998) phenomenological interview process involving three separate ninety-minute interviews with each participant: a focused life history, a session in which the participant reconstructs the details of his experiences, and finally a session in which s/he reflects on the personal meaning arising from the previous two sessions. Interviews are meant to be spaced from three days to a week apart, allowing for both the participant and the interviewer to consider what they have said in the meantime. The passage of time and the multiple meetings reduce the chance of one idiosyncratic interview (when the participant or interviewer may be sick or distracted) making a significant impact on the research. It also allows the interviewer/participant relationship to deepen.

In this inquiry, my practice was to conduct only two in-depth interviews. The first was conducted after I had observed one or more tours/programs with the teacher-participant. It constituted a focused life history, with the key questions being:

- What title do you prefer to use in reference to work at this site?
- How did you come to be a [whatever title she or he preferred]?
As seemed fitting, I then explored areas related to the influence of family, school, friends, and work on their decision to become and remain a museum teacher.

The second interview focused on the day-to-day experience of teaching at the institution with which the teacher-participant was affiliated. Here the key questions were

- Can you describe what you do when you’re teaching at the museum?
- How do you know how to teach at this institution, in this setting?
- Are you learning when you’re teaching? If so, what?

I then asked the teacher-participant to focus on the transcript of one recent tour/program that I had observed with him or her and to reconstruct for me the thinking behind that tour. Each interview was then transcribed and returned to the teacher-participant at a later date for corrections and comments.

Interviews were also conducted with the education coordinator or equivalent at each site in order to establish the educational framework and expectations within which the teacher-participant operated.

**Document Review**

Further to establishing a sense of this educational framework, document research was undertaken at each site. Documents consulted included brochures outlining tours and programs for the general public, tour/program outlines created by the site for use by the teacher-participants, training materials, and annual reports.

**DATA ANALYSIS AND REPORTING**

Throughout the course of the data collection and analysis, I employed a “constant comparative method” aimed at the mutual, simultaneous shaping of the data (Glaser and Strauss 1967). Data, including field notes, interviews, and document analyses, were entered into and managed through the use of NUD*IST qualitative software, primarily
making use of its “code and retrieve” capabilities. Structuring the data was probably the most difficult task. I was wary of “robbing” individual cases of their wholeness but still keen to portray the information that had been put into my custody in a way that people would understand (Marshall 1981), what Patton terms “rendering applicable and coherent the flux of raw reality” (1980).

As outlined above in the section entitled “Research Design,” my original conceptualization of the study was as a multi-site case study of museum teachers working in three museum settings. Therefore, as I began my analysis of the data at my first site, the Nature Centre, I considered the centre to be a case and the teacher-participants as examples of teachers working within that setting. However, as I collected and analyzed the data the teacher-participants began to emerge as two very distinct individuals who seemed to warrant case status in their own right. This pattern continued at the second site, the Community History Museum. In reflecting upon my task as one of learning participant categories in order to provide a framework for them to “tell it as they see it” (Patton 1980, 28), I came to understand that I was working with eight different cases of museum teachers who worked within three different non-school settings. Graphically I could depict this research design as eight smaller circles each with its own heart.

Figure 2: Second representation of case studies.

My analysis then became a two-step process of first undertaking a “within-the-case” analysis of data associated with each teacher-participant and then, second, doing a “cross-
case" analysis among the teacher-participants using a matrix system that I developed (Merriam 1998, 194-95). However, as I completed data collection at the Country Art Gallery and continued with my ongoing analysis, similar categories began to emerge at a meta-level amongst teacher-participants at the same sites. For the third time I reconceptualized my research design. This time, again speaking graphically, the design emerged as three contiguous but separate circles, each enclosing two or three hearts.

![Figure 3: Final representation of case studies.](image)

In this final analysis, I treated each of the institutions as a case within which I tried to reconstruct and critically re-present the voices of two or three teacher-participants who taught within its confines. This became a three-step process wherein I began, first, by analyzing the data pertaining to each teacher-participant, noting emerging themes and creating a profile of the individual (Seidman 1991, 99). This interpretive account was then shared with the respective teacher-participant, from whom I requested corrections, clarifications, and comments. At the same time, I developed an analysis of each teacher-participant’s teaching as I had observed it, with an emphasis on the "reconstructed" tour, which we had discussed in some detail. I was particularly interested in those points at which I had made “Observer Comments” and at which in the subsequent interview I asked the teacher-participant, “Why did you do that?” These were points at which I had discerned that he or she had had to make a decision beyond simply following the tour outline provided. The point of the subsequent discussion was to discover the intent of the move from his or her perspective. Once these eight profiles/analyses had been developed, I then
undertook to do a “within-the-case” analysis involving all the teacher-participants at each institution, comparing and contrasting themes and categories. And finally, I did a “cross-case” analysis using a matrix. At each step I moved along when it appeared that I had exhausted my data sources, that categories had been saturated, and that there was an emergence of regularities (Merriam 1998, 164). This “progressive focusing” led to certain assertions about each case and across all three (Stake 1995, 9–12).

CORROBORATION

. . . triangulation is a state of mind. If you self-consciously set out to collect and double-check findings, using multiple sources and modes of evidence, the verification process will largely be built into the data-gathering process, and little more need to be done than to report on one’s procedures. (Miles and Huberman 1984, 235)

My intention in designing this study was to seek not only to locate multiple sources of data such as different participants, different tours and different settings (Mathison 1988), but also to utilize the multiple methods of research that I have described above in detail: participant observation, interviews, and document analysis. This was further enriched by the amount of time I spent on site (over one hundred hours) and with the eight teacher-participants (a further thirty-five hours of in-depth interviews).

Field notes, interviews, and interpretive accounts were referred to the concerned teacher-participants to check for errors and plausibility and to release the data. The rich, thick description that contributes to plausibility for both participants and readers also threatens the anonymity of the teacher-participants and so this “member check” (Stake 1995, 115; Merriam 1998, 205) was a particularly important point.

Finally, at different points in my research, I offered the themes and categories developed to my peers for scrutiny and feedback.
PART II

THE DATA

In this segment of the paper I focus on answering the question

- What reasoning lies behind museum teaching?

I first present, in Chapter Four, an overview of the settings and organizational climate for each of the three cases—the Community History Museum, the Country Art Gallery, and the Nature Centre—along with a brief description of each of the teacher-participants in the study. Chapters Five, Six, and Seven contain site-by-site accounts of a tour or program offered by each of the teacher-participants, followed by a discussion of the pedagogical reasoning that underlies the teaching presented.
SITES AND TEACHER-PARTICIPANTS

THE COMMUNITY HISTORY MUSEUM

The Community History Museum is located in a small city near a much larger urban centre. Part of a complex that also houses an art gallery and a regional archives, the museum highlights a local history collection from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Frequent special exhibits are installed. There is also an active program schedule, including school and adult tours, workshops, lectures, and special events. Programs and tours are presented by several interpreters, who vary in number from eight to twelve. These staff members are on contract to the museum and paid a flat fee for each program presented.

An average of twenty-five thousand people visit the complex annually, of whom ten thousand participate in booked tours. These are primarily school tours or after-hours programs for children’s groups. Less than ten percent are tours for adults. There are no regularly scheduled public tours like those offered at the Country Art Gallery and the Nature Centre. During my work with the teacher-participants at this site (December to June), a popular special exhibit on the sinking of the *Titanic* was responsible for a marked increase in the numbers of both school and group tours, as well as casual walk-in visitors.

Recruitment and Training of Historical Interpreters

Interpretive staff are recruited, supervised, and scheduled by the Education Coordinator and her assistant. Recruitment is generally undertaken through word of mouth by interpreters currently on staff. The Education Coordinator looks for a background in
history or art as demonstrated by experience as a working artist, evidence of self-directed learning in the area, and/or an academic degree. She also values experience working with the public in situations like parent-teacher associations, seniors' organizations, Cub, or student groups. She looks for those who prefer working in a group situation. Following an interview with the Education Coordinator, a prospective interpreter is given information about the programs and invited to follow several tours to help them reach a comfort level with the process of touring. Later they are able to teach portions of one or two tours, assisting a veteran interpreter. At that point the Education Coordinator follows the tours and makes her decision about hiring. There is an intensive week of training each September during which the Education Coordinator hopes to instil a sense of responsibility and a level of professionalism in these new interpreters. Professionalism, for the Education Coordinator, encompasses understandings of the goals of the museum, schoolteacher expectations and a personal sense of the way in which an interpreter presents himself or herself to the public plus knowledge of the information, and a sense of dedication to the site that goes above and beyond the money received for doing tours.

Tour Design and Development

Tour outlines are written by the Education Coordinator and her assistant. Although in most cases they are designed to meet the curriculum needs of the schools, the same tour format serves for adult or special interest children's groups. For each new tour, the Education Coordinator provides training for the interpreters that includes a walk-through of the exhibit, photocopies of the label copy, and the tour script. Occasionally interpreters have the opportunity to contribute to the outline as well as to “workshop” and provide feedback on the program itself (Int-HMH2, 708–51). Program evaluation generally takes place in June, the end of the program year, and involves a review of both the teacher evaluations and interpreter feedback received regarding the tours in question. A personal evaluation of
each interpreter may also be done by the Education Coordinator, given to the interpreter, and later discussed together.

The Setting

The Community History Museum is housed in a former three-storey jail built in the mid-nineteenth century, to which has been added a modern, one-storey wing. To orient the reader, I will briefly describe the building as a whole (more detailed descriptions of the galleries are contained in the accounts). Inside, a two-storey foyer connects the historic and modern structures. In this foyer are the reception counter for the complex, coat racks, the gift shop, a stairwell to the second floor, and connecting hallways to other areas. The basement (not open to the public) houses collections and a staff common room. On the ground floor, accessible from the foyer, are the gift shop, the art gallery, the archives and the jail cells. Six small to medium-sized museum galleries and a meeting room are located on the second floor. In the study, the galleries are referred to as Archaeology Gallery, Travelling Gallery, Photography Gallery, Farm Gallery, Titanic Special Exhibit Gallery, and Interactive Gallery. On the third floor is a large open area, referred to as “the classroom,” and staff offices.

The Interpreters

Gord

Gord has been an interpreter here for three years. He conducts one or two tours a week, primarily for school groups, while pursuing other part-time paid and volunteer work. In his late fifties, he is recently retired from a thirty-five-year career in teaching history and social sciences at the secondary school level, for the latter part of which he was the department

\[1\] Names are pseudonyms.
head. He has a B.A. in history and a Master of Education degree. Immediately following his retirement, he completed a Certificate in Museum Studies. He came to the Community History Museum because he was approached by a staff person on the first day of the course and asked if, as a retired history teacher, he might like to “do some interpreting” for her museum (Int-HMG1, 85).

JENNIFER

Jennifer has been an interpreter here for ten years. Like the other interpreters at this site, she works primarily with school groups, conducting two to three tours per week. She is in her early forties. Her original career was in social work, in which she holds a community college diploma (Int-HMJ1, 171-83). After a couple of years working, she “started a new career as a Mom.” When her children were older, she read in the local newspaper about an interpreter position at the Community History Museum. She entered into training thinking it was a volunteer position. It was a “bonus” to find out there was a “little bit of financial remuneration — not much, but a little bit” (Int-HMJ1, 65-88).

HELEN

Helen has been an interpreter here for five years. She works primarily with school groups, conducting one or two tours per week. As well, on weekends and other occasions she works as the front-desk receptionist for the site. She is in her early thirties, with a young family. She does supply school teaching on a call-in basis and has just learned of her acceptance as a student in the faculty of education of a nearby university. This builds upon her Honours B.Sc. with a specialization in physical anthropology and a major in psychology. She has completed several courses toward a Certificate in Museum Studies with the provincial museum association, but has no plans to resume that. She explains her decision to leave the museum field as a question of stability and income.
THE COUNTRY ART GALLERY

The Country Art Gallery is located in a small community near a large urban centre. It is surrounded by one hundred acres of conservation land. There is an active program schedule, including school and group tours, lectures, talks, walks, and music and holiday programs. Casual visitors to the site number more than one hundred thousand per year. A further thirty thousand people visit the site with pre-booked school or group tours.

Booked tours are presented by both paid “gallery educators” and by volunteer “docents.” There are approximately fifty docents, at various stages of their training, of whom two-thirds volunteer only on weekdays and the remaining one-third on weekends only. Docents deliver one in four school tours, one in ten booked adult tours, and all public tours (offered weekends and daily during the summer, free of charge, to the general public). All remaining tours are delivered by gallery educators, of whom there were eight at the time of this study.

Unlike many art galleries in which the education service was originally delivered by a corps of volunteers, the program at the Country Art Gallery began with one paid “guide” who provided tours as well as secretarial services. As more guides were required, their duties changed to encompass the security of the galleries as well as information provision. These guides evolved into the present “security guides”, stationed throughout the gallery. At the same time, the formal education service was assumed by paid gallery educators. In the past decade, as demand for education and public programs increased, the volunteer docent program was instituted in its present form of two streams, weekday and weekend.

Recruitment and Training of Docents and Gallery Educators

Recruitment and training for the docent program is undertaken by the Docent Coordinator, who reports to the Education Coordinator. The Docent Coordinator looks for people with public speaking experience, demonstrated leadership capabilities, some past connection
with children, previous volunteer commitments, and a “burning desire” to be at the Country Art Gallery. An interest in art is considered critical, although this need not be coupled with any prior education or training in the area. Initial training for docents focuses on Canadian art. In addition to their own research, both new and veteran docents are expected to participate in half-day training sessions that are conducted every other week throughout the year. The subject matter of sessions includes gallery background, art history and materials, museum education theory, and tour “run-throughs” as well as practice leading tours. Ongoing feedback and evaluation tend to focus on the accuracy of information presented along with suggestions for practical improvements to the tour.

Gallery educators are hired directly by the Education Coordinator. They are considered part-time workers and paid a modest hourly wage. In recruiting gallery educators, the Education Coordinator seeks people with at least a B.A. (or equivalent experience) in museum studies, art history, visual arts, Native studies, or education. She considers it important to attract a range of gallery educators so that their different areas of expertise may be shared amongst themselves and with visitors. New recruits “have to get along with the group” with whom they will be working, including both gallery educators and docents. Accordingly, the Education Coordinator seeks those who also have a background in program delivery, for example, schoolteachers or tour guides. She may also hire from the docent group. She finds that many volunteers come to the gallery with the background and experience required to be gallery educators, but feel a need to first become comfortable in the setting.

As each gallery educator is hired individually, initial training is done on an ad hoc basis. New educators receive copies of all tour outlines. A tour outline generally covers the tour’s theme, goals, expected learning outcomes, materials required, and a detailed framework. The framework is organized along the lines of what is termed a “conceptual map” which defines the divisions of the tour as museum literacy, visual literacy, art criticism, art history and aesthetics, and art-making. Under each division is listed suggested
timing and activities. Educators are expected to supplement this information through their own research activities.

Ongoing training for gallery educators is of two types: one, the dissemination of information regarding a new hanging of permanent collection works, and two, the introduction of an entirely new program. In the first instance — a new hanging — gallery educators are provided with a revised tour outline, extended label text, and possibly a walk-through with the curator responsible for the installation. In the second instance — a new program — the Country Art Gallery provides a full- or half-day training session for gallery educators and may run through the whole program as if the educators were themselves a school group. On occasion, gallery educators are hired on contract to help develop these new programs. More usually, there is an opportunity for them to comment on new programs.

**Tour Design and Development**

The development of a school tour is radically different from that of a tour designed for adult visitors. A school-tour outline is written by the Education Officer and covers the tour’s theme, goals, expected learning outcomes, and materials required, along with a detailed framework. The framework is organized as a conceptual map, based on a process of looking at art. The structure of the tour’s conceptual map, incorporating visual literacy, art criticism, aesthetics, and art-making, comes from a discipline-based approach to arts education (DBAE) (Getty Center 1985, 13–19). Suggested timing and activities are listed under each division. Gallery educators, but not necessarily docents, are expected to supplement the information through their own research activities.

On the other hand, the tour outline for adult programs, such as the general and special exhibit tours discussed in Chapter Six, notes theme, goals, and expected learning outcomes but provides a conceptual map based on either the parts of the tour (introduction, body, conclusion) or the exhibit itself. These tours are meant to be "gallery-driven."
Docents are encouraged to work with the Docent Coordinator and the Education Officer to “weave their own story” around the theme and connections that they find relevant. Nevertheless, feedback for school and adult tours tends to focus on the accuracy of information provided and suggestions for practical improvements.

The Setting

This large public art gallery is located in a rural setting near a metropolitan centre. Most of its thirteen exhibition spaces are dedicated to changing exhibitions of the large permanent collection of Canadian paintings, drawings, prints, and sculpture, although several galleries are used for short-term special exhibits. Visitors enter through a large two-storey foyer with a high cathedral ceiling and log walls on three sides; on the fourth side is a glass wall overlooking the surrounding forest. The entryway houses the reception and information counters, coat and hat storage, an open assembly area, and a large gift shop. Behind the reception counter are stairs leading to “the Loft”, the area set aside for docents/educators. Stairs and ramps lead from the foyer into the first- and second-storey galleries as well as to the basement-level restaurant and other public facilities.

The Docents and Educators

Joan

Joan has been with the Country Art Gallery for ten years, first as a volunteer docent and now as a paid gallery educator. She conducts from four to eight tours per week, primarily for schoolchildren. Joan is in her late forties with a grown family. She has a degree in economics but recently returned to school to obtain her Bachelor’s degree in education, specializing in adult education. Joan first came to the Gallery as a member of the volunteer committee, then trained as a docent, and was hired as a gallery educator following the
recent completion of her B.Ed. In part, Joan took the job because she believed that gallery education could become a career for her (Int-AGJ1, 626-46).

**BARN**

Barn has been a docent with the Country Art Gallery for eight years. Every weekend he conducts two or three general or special exhibit tours for casual visitors. He was born and raised in South Africa, coming from what he calls a “humble background” (Int-AGB1, 262). Describing his upbringing, he recalls numerous instances of discrimination against both him and his family because, “My dad had my colour, my mum was a white lady, so we were sort of a mixed group” (Int-AGB1, 266-67). Barn entered teaching because it was one of the few professions open to him (Int-AGB1, 567-70). He taught at the junior level, ultimately becoming a school principal. Barn held this position until emigrating to Canada where he returned to teaching in specialized programs and at the junior high level. He also served as an adjunct professor in a faculty of education (FN-AGB1, 60). At the same time he was able to obtain a B.A. in the humanities and later, an M.A. in political science. He is now retired.

Barn came to the Country Art Gallery because he was “ready for a change” (Int-AGB1, 84). He felt he would be able both to make use of his teaching skills and to explore his interests in art and art-making in this environment (Int-AGB1, 138-56).

**WALT**

Walt has been a docent at The Country Art Gallery for two years. He comes in one day a week to conduct school or adult tours. He attended teachers’ college but was still only nineteen years old when he first began to teach in an inner city school (Int-AGW1b, 96). After becoming a vice-principal, he left to teach in several non-school settings, including science and outdoor education centres, a public television station and a faculty of education. He returned to the school system, becoming a principal, the position he filled at several
schools until his retirement. He holds a B.A. in history and a Master of Education (Curriculum) degree. Upon retirement he became an educational consultant and began to look at "volunteering somewhere to use my teaching" (Int-AGW1B, 64). His commitment to volunteering is based on a desire to give things back in gratitude for what he has been given — and to do it willingly (Int-AGW1b, 240-52). He chose to volunteer with the Country Art Gallery because of its proximity to his home.

THE NATURE CENTRE

The Nature Centre is a large conservation area located on the outskirts of a big city. At the time of the study, it had been in operation for almost twenty years. Average annual attendance is one hundred and twenty thousand, of whom sixty-eight to seventy thousand participate in pre-booked programs. The Nature Centre offers over forty programs in environmental education aimed at a variety of audiences, including elementary and secondary level students, English as a Second Language adult groups, and Cub, Scout, and Girl Guide groups. There is also an active program of daily guided tours for the casual visitor.

The formal title for site teachers is "educational assistants" but the Education Coordinator prefers to call them "nature interpreters," even though she encounters problems defining that term for the general public. Interpreters conduct public and school programs, referred to more casually as "hikes" or "walks". There are about twenty men and women working on a "continuing part-time" basis. Several more are available to work as needed. A large group of volunteers assists where necessary, but do not conduct programs or walks.


Recruitment and Training of Nature Interpreters

The Education Coordinator is responsible for recruiting and training the nature interpreters. In hiring, she looks for someone with good presentation skills who has worked with groups before. Evidence of varied teaching experience with both children and adults is considered important, but formal teacher certification is not necessary. She also looks for the personal qualities of flexibility, co-operation, and being able to “wing it.” Although a knowledge of environmental issues is valuable, she is wary of hiring someone who might be “too idealistic.” Interpreters are hired on an individual basis and train by reviewing the “program write-ups” available for each program. They also follow veteran interpreters as they conduct their own programs. New interpreters are assigned to conduct programs as soon as possible. Once in the field, they are encouraged to discuss any challenges encountered, with fellow interpreters and/or the Education Coordinator. An annual one-day training session is offered for both new and veteran interpreters.

Program Design and Development

Programs are developed by the Education Coordinator, often with the assistance of interpreters who have a special interest or training in the topic under development. The Education Coordinator first writes up a draft program, circulating it for feedback to discipline specialists on staff and interpreters with experience/education in the topic area. Programs are then tested with schoolteachers and their classes who are amenable to being guinea pigs. One such example is a full-day program on soil, which was redesigned as a half-day offering on the advice of participating teachers. Once a program is in operation, it is continually evaluated by interpreters and schoolteachers. The Education Coordinator modifies the programs in response both to concerns/issues identified and as to a need for the Nature Centre to be “dynamic” and changing. In her experience, neither participating schoolteachers nor interpreters “like to do the same thing year after year.”
The “program write-up” given to interpreters offers a rough outline, including aims and objectives, the main components of the program (introduction, conclusion, and suggested “stops”), where stops might take place, and suggested activities for intended grade levels. A significant amount of information is provided on the topic of study within the body of the write-up. Interpreters are encouraged to read this, make notes and choose what is relevant for the grade level with which they are working.

The Setting

At the Nature Centre a number of trails radiate out from a central interpretive centre building. Entry to the site is along a long paved drive leading from the main road to a parking lot. From there the interpretive centre is reached on foot. A three-storey building constructed in the late seventies, the Centre is entered through the main set of doors. Once inside, there are public washrooms to the right, to the left is an enclosed theatre with seating for one hundred and fifty, and the main reception area/gift shop is straight ahead. Further into the building there is an open space rising from the lower level up to a beamed wooden cathedral ceiling. The main level is primarily open space with small displays on the perimeter. Attached at one side is a glass greenhouse used both for cafeteria seating and by the interpreters for program introductions.

At the time of the study seasonal decorations were displayed around the centre. There were wreaths on the walls and grapevines with frosted cones and ribbons on the posts. In the middle of the open floor lies a “Nature Twister” game. But, instead of colours as in the original sixties Twister game, the categories are water, forest, energy, land, and wildlife. A quotation around the outside of the game read: “Everything connects to everything else.” Staff areas are accommodated in a second-level gallery encircling this space.
The lower level contains several enclosed “classroom” areas along with displays for the general public. The outside walls here are primarily glass. As the interpretive centre is built on a hill, most of the trails are immediately accessible from the lower level.

**The Interpreters**

**ALICE**

Alice has been a paid part-time interpreter at the Nature Centre for over a decade. She conducts five or six programs a week for schoolchildren, along with occasional weekend programs for casual visitors. A native of the nearby city, she has a B.A. in psychology and teaching credits in environmental studies and English as a second language (ESL). She also took a course in beekeeping (Int-NCA1, 476–85) and is certified to teach swimming and canoeing. After university she found seasonal employment taking “youth at risk” on canoe trips into wilderness areas. “We were kind of social worker/canoe trippers,” she says (Int-NCA1, 429–55). She continued with such programs for several years in different parts of Canada, following what she calls “my nomadic kind of nature” (Int-NCA1, 773–88). Once back in the city, she took a job working at an outdoor education centre operated by the school board. “I didn’t really realize that there were outdoor centres per se ’cause I’d never gone as a kid” (Int-NCA1, 831) but she “fit right in” doing odd jobs — some artwork, displays, and teaching (Int-NCA1, 836–50). Later she was hired by the Nature Centre, but continues to work on an occasional basis at the outdoor education centre.

**Dwight**

Dwight has worked at the Nature Centre for seven years. He conducts three to four school programs a week, along with very occasional weekend work. He spent his early years in the nearby city. After graduating from university with a B.A. and then a teaching certificate (mathematics and social studies), he went to Japan, where he remained for three years
teaching mathematics and science in English. Back in Canada, he taught high-school mathematics and some geography. After returning to university to upgrade his credentials in geography (equivalent of Honours B.A. in geography), he became “interested in taking children out of doors and seeing the real world” through field trips (Int-NCD1, 93–111). He subsequently became head of geography at two different high schools. During this time, he was seconded, first as a teacher/environmental interpreter at a residential outdoor field centre, and later as a curriculum developer/teacher at an urban study centre. He also worked weekends at several field and nature centres.

Upon his retirement, Dwight felt that he “still liked kids [and] still liked to see how they react to the environment” (Int-NCD1, 467–75) so he applied to and was hired by the Nature Centre. On occasion, he also works as a nature tour guide, accompanying groups to Iceland, Antarctica, and the Canadian Arctic. He is also active in a variety of volunteer environmental and neighbourhood committees.

In this chapter I have introduced the eight teacher-participants, Gord, Jennifer, Helen, Joan, Bern, Walt, Alice, and Dwight, and have presented an overview of the settings and organizational climates in which they teach. In the next three chapters I will examine how each reasons his or her way through a tour or program in the settings described.
CHAPTER FIVE

THE COMMUNITY HISTORY MUSEUM—THE
PEDAGOGICAL REASONING OF INTERPRETERS

This chapter is an examination of the processes of pedagogical reasoning and actions within
which the museum teacher's knowledge is used. To reiterate, Shulman (1987) reasons that
all teaching begins with some form of text, piece of material, or set of values or needs with
which the teacher is presented and challenged to take what he or she already understands
and make it ready for effective instruction. Pedagogical reasoning then involves a cycle
through the activities of comprehension, transformation, instruction, evaluation, reflection,
and new comprehensions, although not necessarily in that order. According to Shulman,
the key to the development of pedagogical content knowledge lies in the transformation of
the content into active teaching. Pedagogical content knowledge is "the capacity of the
teacher to transform the content knowledge he or she possesses into forms that are
pedagogically powerful and yet adaptive to the variations in ability and background
presented by the students" (p. 15).

I have discussed the general methodological features of this study in Chapter Three,
aspects of which I will now briefly review. In order to observe and discuss pedagogical
reasoning with the teacher-participants, I focused my analysis on one tour of the several
that I observed with each person. The remaining tours served to contextualize that
experience. I then transcribed my field notes for the one observation and returned them to
the teacher-participant for review and comment. This was followed by an in-depth
interview in which I asked the teacher-participant to reconstruct the reasoning behind his or
her observable acts from the point at which he or she had begun to think about the tour until just after its completion. As we discussed memories of the tour, I cued the teacher-participant using the observer’s comments that had emerged for me during the tour, by asking, “Why did you do that?” Later, using Shulman’s model as discussed in Chapter Three, I identified the aspects of pedagogical reasoning I saw emerging from the data. This analysis was also returned to the individual teacher-participants for review and comment.

The tour or program in question was not necessarily chosen to be an example of good practice for either the interpreter himself or herself or for the field in general. Rather than trying to evaluate the teaching featured, I tried to understand why things happened from the teacher’s point of view. Accordingly, I was interested in not only what the teacher considered to be routine moves but also where the teacher-participant appeared to make a teaching decision that, from my perspective, required him or her to go beyond the site’s tour or program outline. The point of the subsequent discussion was to discover what the intent of the move was from the perspective of the teacher-participant.

Once a profile/analysis of each teacher-participant had been developed, I undertook a “within-the-case” analysis of all the teacher-participants at each institution, comparing and contrasting themes and categories. Finally, I did a “cross-case” analysis using a matrix. At each step, I moved on when it appeared that I had exhausted my data sources, that categories had been saturated, and that there was an emergence of regularities (Merriam 1998, 164). This “progressive focusing” lead to certain assertions about each case and across all three (Stake 1995, 9–12).

At the outset I should say that complications are inherent in the kind of task I set for myself. While I am trying, in a sense, to “recover” the relationship between understandings and practice, the harsh reality is that much of what a teacher does is spontaneous or intuitive (yet informed by certain understandings) and “hidden from view” even from the teacher himself or herself. My task is to try to make reasonable inferences about what is often hidden.
In the next three chapters I present a brief account of one tour conducted by each of the eight teacher-participants in the three different settings, the Community History Museum, the Country Art Gallery, and the Nature Centre. Each account begins with a synopsis of the tour, followed by a description of the interaction as it was recorded in my field notes and later reviewed by the teacher-participant in question. Each represents a complete tour from beginning to end but offers only enough detail to contextualize teacher-participant thinking. I hope that each tour account will not only provide the reader with a sense of what it feels like to teach in the museum, gallery, or park setting, but will also contribute to development in the museum field of a system of notation and “memory” that may help to counteract the “collective amnesia” (Shulman 1987, 14) that occurs around acts of teaching. I conclude each account with an analysis of the aspects of pedagogical reasoning that underlie the visible acts of instruction from the perspective of the teacher-participant, followed by my own summary of the account and its meaning for this study. I close each chapter with a case analysis to summarize the emerging themes and categories. I begin in this chapter with an analysis of the pedagogical reasoning of the three interpreters Gord, Jennifer, and Helen, at the Community History Museum.

THE TOURS

Gord’s Tour

SYNOPSIS

The characters in this tour account are Gord, a teacher-participant in the study; Judy, his partner- interpreter for this tour and new to the site; Ms. Peel, the schoolteacher; and twenty grade 4 and 5 students.
The setting is the Community History Museum on a cold weekday morning in late winter. (See Chapter Four for a more complete description of the institution.) The tour is entitled “Time Trekkers” and is designed to be an introduction to the science of archaeology using the exhibits and artifacts of the museum. It is a frequently booked tour and Gord has conducted it a number of times. He feels he knows the tour content very well. However, today he is working with Judy, an interpreter new to the site, who has no experience conducting it. Neither interpreter knows much about the expected group other than the basic data on the booking sheet, which tells them to expect about forty students from a local private school, ranging from grades 2 to 5.

On this tour, Gord works from the script prepared by the Education Coordinator for a grade 6 level audience. The script itself is a seven-page document of which, in order to preserve the anonymity of the site, I provide only the brief outline below. Omitted are a list of “curriculum connections,” detailed questions and how-to instructions for each activity, and the accompanying worksheet. In particular, the worksheet is an integral part of the program on which findings from each of the activities are intended to be recorded. The following is provided to suggest the emphases and structure desired by the museum:

**Time Trekkers: Archaeology School Program**

**Goals**
- Introduce students to the “science” of archaeology by exploring exhibitions and resources at the Community History Museum.
- Allow students to interact and question the process of archaeology.
- Provide hands-on activities that will help students understand the how and why of archaeology.
- Promote the Community History Museum as a learning environment for school and public programs.

**Outline**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>10 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(general information and vocabulary)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Video Group</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garbage bag activity</td>
<td>5 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archaeology video</td>
<td>30 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stratigraphy activity</td>
<td>10 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Duration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archaeology exhibit</td>
<td>10 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mapping activity</td>
<td>8–10 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artifact identification</td>
<td>8–10 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grid</td>
<td>8–10 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reconstruction</td>
<td>8–10 minutes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Groups switch and repeat

Conclusion 5 minutes

The students arrive and Judy and Gord divide them into two groups based on their grade levels. At first Gord follows the outline, taking his group to the Archaeology Gallery where they undertake the delineated activities. However, after speaking to Judy, he goes “off-script” and leads his group into the special exhibit on the Titanic. He returns to the archaeology program in the Interactive Gallery where he asks the group to watch part of the video and then do the activities. As a conclusion, with the hearty endorsement of the schoolteacher, he takes the students to see the Jail Gallery, from whence they depart for the school bus.

Tour Account

In the following and subsequent accounts I have tried to describe the tours in a somewhat literary form. The accounts are transcribed from careful field notes in which I attempted to capture dialogue verbatim. They have been edited only so far as to remove the characteristics of oral speech that a teacher-participant would not use in writing (Seidman 1998, 104). Ellipsis points indicate the omission of content-specific explanations offered by the interpreter to the group that I felt were not pertinent to the subject of my inquiry.

The following account of a tour is one of two I followed with Gord. I present it in its entirety to capture the nature of a typical, regularly scheduled elementary-school tour at the Community History Museum and the interactions that occur amongst the interpreter, the schoolteacher, the students, other museum staff, and casual visitors to the site.
Gord works in the third-floor classroom area of the museum, setting up for the tour. He is wearing khaki pants and a sweater with his name tag attached. He picks out a red bin marked "Time Trekkers" and says, "This is a good activity because it's one the teacher can do later in class."

After collecting the worksheets for the tour, he goes downstairs for coffee, and then comes back with it to wait in the foyer. Today the fire alarms are being tested so that every few minutes a high-pitched beeping fills the foyer.

Through the glass front doors, staff can see the yellow school bus pull up in front of the museum. The schoolteacher comes in first, followed by thirty-eight students, who proceed to hang up their coats and hats on the racks provided. As the group arrives, Gord and Judy briefly discuss the tour. They decide on a division of fifty-five minutes for each of the two major segments. Gord will take grades 4 and 5; Judy will take grades 2 and 3. Gord leads his group upstairs.

**ARCHAEOLOGY GALLERY**

The Archaeology Gallery is located in a small space at the top of the stairwell. Exhibits line the walls. There is a raised boardwalk with a wooden railing between the exhibits and a central area. Gord stands on the raised boardwalk, looking out at the students. The schoolteacher is standing at the back of group, facing Gord.

"I'm going to talk a little about what we'll be doing. You're a little older, so you can work without seeing the video first, I think," Gord says. As he speaks, Judy leads her group up the stairs and into the next gallery. "Let's get some pencils and boards over here. I hope you've got your own pencils—some of these aren't very sharp. First let me hand out the worksheets, then I'll show you what we're going to do. Your teacher—excuse me, what is your name?"

"Ms. Peel," she replies.
"MRS. Peel!!!" chime all the students together.
"I just got married," she says, with some embarrassment.
"I'm going to give Ms. Peel some admission cards for you kids so that you'll be able to come back with two adults and visit the museum for free. There's some homework for you, too," Gord says, turning to the teacher. "I have an evaluation sheet from the museum that we hope you'll fill out for us." He hands out the worksheets. Students come forward to pick up boards and pencils.

"One pencil and then step back," Ms. Peel cautions them.
"Choosing a pencil seems to be one of the most onerous tasks." Gord says to the schoolteacher.

"Will we get to see the jail today?" asks a group of students.
"We can make it that way if you’re really bad!" he says with a smile. "If you guys are really good and get all your work done then I’ll take you to see the jail."

Gord begins the introduction to this section, telling students about the worksheets. "You’ll have lots of time to look but you need to pay attention now—this is the section on artifact identification." He goes on to explain the activity, then elaborates, "There are some words you’ll need this morning. Maybe your teacher has already talked about them. Archaeology—do you know what that is? . . . Now, an artifact—how many can tell me what an artifact is?" After some discussion, he directs them, "Now, I want you to write this down—an artifact is . . ." The students record his words on their worksheets.

Gord invites them up to see the exhibits. Everyone walks up onto the boardwalk, forming two rows along the rail, facing the first ‘dig site’. Gord stands behind them. "This is still a bit of a problem—it’s not the greatest space in the world," he says. Gord directs their attention to various items in the display. He talks about archaeology in Ontario and around the world. The noises of staff and visitors talking in the lower foyer drift up the stairs.

Gord turns to the schoolteacher and asks her, "Did you get the teacher’s kit? No? I’ll get one for you later."

He leans over the rail between the boardwalk and the display and points out an object to a student. "Read the worksheet," he says. "You’ll see ‘tools’ and ‘artifacts’."

Gord tells the schoolteacher, "What I’m going to do is move these kids to the centre and these kids will have a chance to look a little more closely." Turning again to the class he says, "What you see here is a photocopy of the original deed that the white man gave to the native chiefs . . ." He tells the schoolteacher, "When these kids are done you can show them that, too."

Gord moves along to third area—another dig site—in the exhibit. He talks with students here.

"I’ve already filled in everything!" one student tells him.

"You guys are really keen! What have we got here?" he says, pointing to something in the exhibit. He moves back and forth behind the kids standing along the rail in front of the second dig site. Most of the students are walking along the boardwalk, looking in the direction of the exhibit and making notes on their worksheets.

"Now," he says to the group as a whole, "I want you to divide into groups." In an aside to the teacher, he asks "How many groups do you have?" They discuss this briefly. Gord turns back to the class, "When you get there, you need to choose one artifact, measure and weigh it. I also want you to go to the grid area as shown on your worksheet."

The students move into groups. The teacher offers some further directions.

There are now four small groups of students along the glass railing at the top of the stairs. Each group has a kit that includes a small scale, a ruler, and a box of small artifacts. A
fifth group works at the "grid" lying on the carpet—a three-by-two-meter frame with rope strung across to form a grid. The children at the grid seem agitated. The teacher goes over and then calls Gord over, too.

Gord comments to me, *They were having a problem with the letters and numbers on the grid. I told them this way,* he says, indicating the worksheet. *And it’s the other way on the floor. The teacher felt this was causing them great concern, so we had to straighten it out.*

The teacher walks over to talk with Gord for a moment but a student approaches and asks her for help.

*No. Choose one artifact each. Like this.* Gord demonstrates to one small group what they should be doing.

The teacher walks the length of the gallery, observing each student group.

*Did you each choose a different one? A different artifact? . . . Are you playing or working?* she asks one group.

Gord walks over to the grid. He crouches down to talk to the students working there. As he does, Judy, the other interpreter, comes in to talk to him. They are worried about the timing and decide on a different arrangement.

Gord asks the teacher, *I don’t want to break their concentration but did you want them to see the Titanic?*

*No, it’s okay,* she says. *This trip was really last minute. I don’t mind if they don’t see it. We take such frequent field trips—about once a month.* She pauses and says, *You know, I just realized that it’s morning recess and I’ve forgotten to ask anyone to replace me on yard duty!*

*Two minutes and then move!* Gord calls to the class. *People—when you’re done with the boxes, put them away. The boys who are standing over there—come over here and help.*

The schoolteacher reiterates Gord’s instruction, *Michael—come over here and help.*

*Everybody listen up! Sssshh,* says Gord. *If you’re not finished the grid yet, others will help you. You can finish up back at school. We’re going to see the Titanic now. Line up behind me now.*

**TITANIC GALLERY**

Gord appears not to have heard the schoolteacher correctly and leads his group into the Titanic Gallery, a temporary special exhibit. The room is about twenty-five feet long by fifteen feet wide. There are exhibits on the walls, interspersed with glass cases containing artifacts. Four platforms hold large artifacts—a deck chair, a steamer trunk, and a table. In the centre of the gallery are two panels displaying interpretive labels and photographs.
Gord leads the group through the gallery, pointing out objects in the display, "This is a trunk that . . . This is a watch . . . This is a table made from wood salvaged from the panelling found floating on the surface . . ." In an aside, he says to the teacher, "Kids don't read. Their parents don't read. So I like to point out to them the more interesting pieces in the gallery."

Judy comes in and asks Gord where his group is at.

"Yes, we've finished. We're just waiting here." He turns and speaks to the group as they walk around the exhibit, "Everybody finished?"

Gord leads the students through into the adjacent Interactive Gallery.

**INTERACTIVE GALLERY**

The Interactive Gallery is a large open room about fifteen feet square with no windows. There is an exhibit mounted on the walls and in several cases around the room. This morning there are small piles of artifacts lying on the floor.

Gord asks everyone to be seated in front of a video monitor at the front of the room where they will watch part of a video on archaeology and complete a section of the worksheet.

A student asks, "This isn't about the Titanic, is it?"

"No," Gord replies. "It's about the theme you came for today—archaeology. I knew you would get off track."

"We'll do that—maybe—anther day," the schoolteacher interjects. "Today we'll stick to our archaeological site."

"Keep looking at your notes," says Gord.

He starts the videotape. The students are sitting on the floor facing the monitor. Behind them sits the teacher. Once the tape is running, Gord goes to each work area around the room.

"These are good worksheets," Gord says to the schoolteacher. "It's a good interpretive staff and the Education Coordinator has developed some good worksheets. But you have to be flexible about using them, too. I like these because you can use them back in class. The Titanic Gallery visit means less time for activities. I suggest you do the Stratigraphic Closet activity back in the classroom . . . ."

Gord leaves the room to get more masking tape while the students continue watching the video and writing on worksheets. Returning, he talks to the class over the video, " . . . Another answer for you. Call it a 'top map.' You can finish the rest of the word back at school."

"You should know topographic. We've studied it," chides the schoolteacher.

"I'll stop the video at this point," Gord says. "I want you to do some of the activities. Maybe you could ask your school librarian to get a copy for you. I'd like you to break into groups again."

"Same group!" the teacher calls out.
Gord directs the small groups to different spots in the room. He hands four of the groups a plastic bag of shards and the fifth group gets the red bin. Then he crouches down and tells the first group, "You guys are pretending you're archaeologists. You're doing detective work . . ."

Gord informs the teacher that there is not enough masking tape for every group to do the same exercise. This is the reason for the red bin. He says to me, "You have to be prepared. I didn't know when I brought the bin down whether or not we would use it. But when I discovered there wasn't enough masking tape, it seemed like a good idea."

Most of the students are sitting in their groups, talking and reassembling broken artifacts using masking tape.

"Anyone need any help?" Gord calls out. One group raises their hands. He walks over to talk with them. He comes back to tell the teacher, "You could do the other exercise in class. You just need to break up a pot." They discuss this briefly.

One student is wandering around looking at the displays on the wall.

"Go and join the group at the end here," Ms. Peel tells him. She repeats this several times before he finally obeys her.

"Just a thought," Gord says to the teacher. "You've got twenty minutes till your bus comes. Do you want to go down to the jail?"

"Oh, yes!" she responds enthusiastically.

"I can put the kids in the cell," he says. "They can look around. We can talk about the last hanging here . . . He was buried in the yard . . ."

"Tell them that!" she replies.

He turns and says to the class, "You guys can recreate a lot of these activities in the classroom. I'm going to ask you to take these apart in a minute. . . . Once you get it together," he says to a group reassembling a broken teacup, "check for hallmarks and other marks to see how old it might have been? Okay, kids!"

"Ssssh," admonishes the teacher.

"I know you worked hard," says Gord. "But now you need to take things apart." In response to a general sigh from the group he says, "It's a heartbreaking activity."

The teacher adds, "The quicker you are the more time there will be to visit the jail!"

Around the room, students are playing with the bits of tape they have removed from their shards. Some have it stuck in their hair.

"I knew this would happen," Gord says. "All those bits of tape!"

He turns to the class and asks, "When you're done, put the materials back on the table. Line up here, please. Put the pencils in the box. Put boards here. Wait here, please."

"Clean up your areas, please," reminds the teacher.

There is a general milling about as students put bags away and line up. At the same time two casual visitors enter the Gallery and look around.
"Here are the rules," Gord tells the class. "In the Jail Gallery you'll see some pictures . . ." he goes on to describe what they will see. "When we go down half will be allowed in the cell and half in the doctor's office. Then we'll change. Everyone will see everything. We'll also see the hanging area. I'll proceed you down."

JAIL GALLERY

Gord stops the group in the hall just outside Jail Gallery. The other half of the group—the grades 2 and 3—is in the Jail Gallery right now.

"We'll let the little guys see the jail first. Here is the hanging area," he says, pointing to the ceiling. "The prisoner would drop right here. The neck breaks and he dies . . . When they started to work on this building then, they exhumed the body and buried him elsewhere. Any questions?"

The other group is just leaving. About forty students mill about, some talking loudly.

Gord points to a large photo of the interior of the old jail, "See the corridor here—this is a picture showing it as it looked before. Ms. Peel—if you would take half of the group into the doctor's office and the other half come here into the cell."

The teacher with the younger group calls out to them, "Let's start to get coats on!"

Gord walks into the doctor's office with several students. He names artifacts and talks a bit about several. Then he stands by the jail cell as a group of students wait inside.

"You didn't lock us in!" they admonish him.

"Okay—you're locked in now," he says, holding the cell door shut while some students pull on it. "You guys are too strong!" He opens the cell door and "releases" them.

Judy comes in to Gallery and says, "The kids are on the bus. I'll start putting away now."

Gord turns to the class and tells them, "When you're finished, go get your coats."

Pedagogical Reasoning Behind Gord's Tour

In the above section I have tried to present an account of the tour as it transpired. Now I turn to a discussion of Gord's pedagogical reasoning, using Shulman's model as described in Chapter Two. The names of Shulman's categories are italicized for emphasis.

Shulman theorizes that Gord must first comprehend the content and purposes of what he is meant to teach (1987, 14). Working from the script as well as from his training notes for this tour, Gord understands that the content of the tour is basic archaeology as well as "certain kinds of experiential things" that can be learned from museums (Int-
HMG2, 782–801). His purpose, as he sees it, is two-fold: first, to demonstrate to the
students that there are “a lot of things in our earth that can be discovered, and it’s fun to
discover” (Int-HMG3, 238–47), and second, to have students experience the museum. As
he says,

It’s the kids’ day at the museum and if they want to spend some time at the
jail or they want to see the Titanic . . . they’re THERE, so why not? It
doesn’t bother me to break it up like that. It’s all part of the experience
‘package’ that they’ll remember. Even if they only remember one thing
about my tour and TWO things about the Titanic—that’s okay, that’s three
things that they didn’t have before they came. (Int-HMG3, 259–67)

In order to achieve his purposes, Gord must transform these comprehensions into
instruction. Shulman argues that transformation involves thinking one’s way from the
subject matter as understood by the teacher into the minds and motivations of the learners
(1987, 16). A critical step toward this end is preparation of the material. For Shulman this
is a process that involves not only scrutinizing the material for errors of omission and
commission but also structuring and segmenting the material into forms better suited to the
teacher’s understanding and style of teaching (p. 16). Because Gord has done the popular
Time Trekkers tour many times before, he has done little specific reading or review of
written materials (Int-HMG2, 865–76). However, he transforms the tour according to his
own understanding of how things should be taught. He conceptualizes the tour as not two
but several, distinct twenty-minute segments that may be mixed and matched without
impeding the tour. Yet rather than grounding his reasoning upon a traditional curricular
repertoire or an array of instructional materials, programs, and conceptions as Shulman
proposes (p. 16), Gord bases his segmentation on available time and space within the
museum building. He thinks of the tour in terms of where and when he will present the
material — video, classroom, gallery:

. . . There are people who really have to start in that place and I say,
“Okay, it doesn’t bother me if I don’t start in that place.” I’d like to start in
that place, too, but it doesn’t bother me if I don’t. I can function doing it the
other way . . . I tend to break everything in segments. I do it with lesson
plans. I do it with everything I do . . . you can’t do the same thing for an
hour and a quarter. It’s impossible. You’d go nuts and so would they . . . .
So I always try to think of things in twenty-minute segments . . . . There’s
the video segment... the classroom segment... the gallery segment. And I find the three segments work better because you can break people up. When you've only got two segments, the kids are either here or they're there. And if somebody's done here and they want to go there but you're not done there and you don't want to go here—you've got a problem! There's no place to go. So that's why I kind of like three... You can start basically at any point. (Int-HMG2, 1573–618)

However, this approach presents a challenge when he factors Judy, the new interpreter, into his reasoning. He discovers that she has learned the tour in two segments, as it was presented to her. Between them they agree on the two fifty-five-minute segments with Judy beginning in the Interactive Gallery. Thereby Gord believes Judy will find her comfort level with a program that is new to her, by working from the natural beginning to the end and by starting with the video that they both agree will give her a little space before teaching (Int-HMG2, 1080–88). However, he still follows a three-part approach that allows him to work around her more conveniently than does the original two-part script. The segmentation allows him to work outside the more linear development of the script.

The next step, representation, involves thinking through the key ideas in the lesson and identifying different ways of representing them to the students (Shulman 1987, 16). As I have discussed in Chapter One, the museum itself is already a representation of certain ways of knowing as expressed through the exhibition of art and artifacts. Furthermore, the Educational Coordinator has re-represented the exhibitions in terms of the school curriculum as expressed in the tour script. I argue that Gord's challenge is not to build multiple forms of representation such as analogies, metaphors, examples, demonstrations, simulations, and exhibitions, but rather to choose among them.

Overall, Gord has decided that the museum's Archaeology Gallery is not designed to be a teaching resource. As he says, "The props are good for teaching but... the space allocation is not good" (Int-HMG2, 1414–30). For example, on this tour he finds the size of the gallery thwarts the instructional method he would prefer to use:

... that particular display with that number of kids is not an easy thing to manipulate. ... You can't deal with both groups of kids—you basically have got to split them up because they can't all look in the same hole at the same time. It's nice if you've got ten or twelve kids. It's beautiful. You take
them to one scene [in the exhibit] in the new subdivision and they look out at the park and you say, “Okay, different scenes—what do you see here? What do you see that is different?” You can do it. But with twenty kids you really can’t . . . . (Int-HMG2, 1367–77)

As a result, Gord chooses to represent much of what he is doing through language—through telling students what they are to do, drawing their attention to certain artifacts and ideas, and having them write responses. Not surprisingly then, he selects the program worksheet as the instructional form that best embodies his representation of the ideas.

The worksheets are a designated part of the tour and have been designed by the Education Coordinator, but Gord’s choice to use them so extensively is his own. Once the worksheets have been distributed, their completion becomes the raison d’être of the tour. Gord sees the worksheets as an essential part of the program because they provide a focus for the student’s experience as well as a memento of the visit. It is important for him that both the students and the teacher get some results from the tour. By including something resembling school work—written work—he believes that the museum tour will be perceived to have more value:

... I think that if people perceive things of value there has to be something to them. There has to be something more than just, “Well, here we are, guys. Let’s have a look around.” There’s got to be some purpose, there’s got to be some focus. We don’t want to make it so focused that the kids don’t have fun! But on the other hand, there’s got to be something purposeful come out of it? So, you should value these worksheets and keep them and use them . . . . This is an important part of the tour. This is your record, if you like, of the tour . . . . It is a souvenir, but I think it’s more than that . . . . Because in order to make the museum worthwhile it’s got to be PERCEIVED as being worthwhile . . . . I think it’s for both—the kids and the teacher. . . . This is a serious exercise—it’s not just fun. There’s some demands going to be made on you, too. (Int-HMG2, 1215–41)

Gord is faced with a dilemma created by the conflicts among achieving his own personal goal to have students “experience” the museum, meeting the desire of the students to have fun, and being accountable to the schoolteacher and her curricular needs. He would prefer that he and the schoolteacher solve this problem together, that they interact almost equally with the kids during the program (Int-HMG2, 1145–46). But he acknowledges that this is not usually possible because the museum is “foreign soil” to the schoolteacher (Int-
HMG2, 1182). He or she may not be able to “reinforce the experience” of the museum in the classroom (Int-HMG2, 1062-3). Instead, Gord chooses unilaterally to use the worksheet to focus on the subject matter and hopes the schoolteacher will do a follow-up back at school to cover any material that he leaves out or does not explain (Int-HMG2, 1554). He believes the worksheet may help the schoolteacher to do that:

... it is an experiential kind of thing. But I think that if you’ve booked a tour and you’re paying money for the tour that there has to be some evidence on our part that we are prepared for you—that we’ve got something to offer you. It’s not just a case of, “Come on in. Put your coats down. Go and look around. Pick that up if you want. Don’t touch that!”... I think it provides the focus. And it gives the teachers the opportunity—and they can tell us this on their evaluation sheets, too—if they like the focus or they don’t like the focus... (Int-HMG2, 1243-59)

Gord has also considered how to adapt the represented material to meet the characteristics of the age group. As he says,

I know what I’m doing that day. I know I’m doing Time Trekkers... I’ve got a whole briefcase at home with just museum stuff. All my notes are there.... I seldom consult them.... If I haven’t done a tour for a while... I’ll go over them and say, “Oh yeah, okay. I’ve got [grade] twos and threes tomorrow.” And I’ll look it up on the sheet [spoken very softly], “What’s the youngest here? What’s the focus here?”... (Int-HMG2, 865-76)

To do this he draws upon his understanding of their “conceptions, preconceptions, misconceptions, and difficulties, language, culture, and motivations, social class, gender, age, ability, aptitude, interests, self-concepts, and attention” (Shulman 1987, 15). The division of the group into two groups, grades 2/3 and grades 4/5, is based upon Gord’s belief that they will be better served in more or less homogeneous groups (Int-HMG2, 827-60). He contrasts this approach with what was the focus of his high-school teaching:

... [In the museum] you’re not teaching by a curriculum—at all.... I guess there is a curriculum in the museum. But, as you can see, thirteen disabled kids in one group—eleven bright grade tens in another group—and then we get a group of sixty that are grades four to eight. The curriculum is there but it’s obviously to be adapted and moulded and changed to suit the particular situations. You’re able to do that. Whereas with a senior high-school economics course, the curriculum is there and the kids basically have to meet the demands of that curriculum. If they’re not up to that perhaps they should not be in that program. But in a museum you’re not going to FAIL any kid!... Every kid gets something out of the museum....
Certain kinds of experiential things that they learn from museums . . . (Int-HMG2, 782–801)

He tries to tailor the tour, sometimes to the needs of the individual students, but more often to the disposition, receptivity, and "chemistry" of the group as a whole. For example, on this tour he spends little time explaining the exercise in the Archaeology Gallery. He discusses his rationale:

I think it . . . depends on the maturity level of the kids . . . [I decide] intuitively, I guess. There are other factors, too: time, just how I sense the kids are acting, whether they’re self-directed or not . . . . Again, they’re taking these worksheets back to the school, so I would hope that teachers don’t just when they get back to school [say], “Okay, you can put those away now kids! You’re done.” There should be a follow-up. And let’s face it, no interpreter is perfect. You never remember to do everything you want to do on a tour. (Int-HMG2, 1523–51)

For the most part, Gord’s adaptations are based on the needs of the students, as he sees them. “We give them the general idea” (Int-HMG3, 211).

. . . if I feel this particular group isn’t going to get something out of it — out of this particular part of the outline — I don’t do it. I ignore it and go on to something else or we spend more time on something else. If the kids are interested in something else, then we’ll spend more time on it. If something doesn’t get done, then it doesn’t get done, that’s all. (Int-HMG2, 1268–79)

Gord moves through the actual instruction of the student group—managing and organizing the group as they move through the museum, explaining how to do the worksheet and the activities, describing the artifacts, and watching the students’ progress. This becomes critically entwined with the actions of the partner-interpreter. For instance, at the completion of his time in the Archaeology Gallery, Gord has to adjust his timing and use of the galleries to accommodate Judy. Gord feels that his allegiance must be to his fellow interpreter when faced with these situations of choice (Int-HMG3, 143–51). This is not only because he considers himself to be a “team player” (Int-HMG2, 982–84) but also because he feels it is important for both halves of the group to enjoy the tour (Int-HMG2, 1577–90).

This brings us to Shulman’s category of evaluation. Much of what is seen in this tour is based on Gord’s response to the schoolteacher’s evaluation of the tour. As she tells
her students that they should be “working” rather than “playing” in the Archaeology Gallery, Gord responds by becoming more “task-oriented” himself (Int-HMG3, 94–111).

I think this is the teacher trying to impress upon them that they’re here for a particular function. But I think all their experiences, within reason, are good ones. . . . you can tell the teachers that are in control of their classes. They’ll often say to the kids that they should stick to their work. . . . They were very good, but it’s good to be reminded every once in a while [chuckles]. But I thought, generally, they were very task-oriented. I had a group in last week and I had one girl say to me, “Do we have to do that?” And I looked down and said, “That’s why you’re here.” And she went right ahead and she did it! She was fine. (Int-HMH3, 94–114)

At several points in the tour he discusses what he thinks ought to be done next with the schoolteacher rather than with the students, as, for example, regarding the visit to the Jail Gallery. Even the worksheet is to be used evaluatively by the schoolteacher rather than by the museum interpreter: “. . . [I]t gives the teachers the opportunity — and they can tell us this on their evaluation sheets, too — if they like the focus or they don’t like the focus . . .” (Int-HMG2, 1243–59).

Much of Gord’s reflection — what Shulman describes as reviewing, reconstructing, re-enacting, and critically analyzing one’s own and the class’s performance — is grounded in his experiences as a schoolteacher both in the classroom and on field trips. As he says, “At this stage of my life I can just reach back and — you know?” (Int-HMG2, 579–607). He feels the choices he makes while teaching stem from something more “innate” (Int-HMG2, 468) or “intuitive” (Int-HMG2, 565).

**Summary**

In conclusion, it is possible to apply Shulman’s cycle of pedagogical reasoning to the thinking behind Gord’s tour. In doing so, certain tensions emerge. One in particular is the challenge posed to Gord by the transformation into teaching of the dual purposes he identified for the tour. Like the docents in Duthie’s (1990) study discussed in Chapter Two, it is difficult for him to attend to both the school-based subject matter of the archaeology program and to the “experience” of the museum. Ultimately, Gord chooses to
emphasize the elements of the tour that he believes will have some continuity in the classroom, for instance, the worksheet and certain of the activities. He tries to address the experience of the museum by taking the students to different spaces and by pointing out artifacts to them. Yet these activities are not examined in his evaluation, reflection, and new comprehension and thus do not appear to become part of his pedagogical content knowledge.

In Gord’s tour pedagogical activities that may be unique to the informal setting are also observed. First, there is the need to adapt and tailor the tour not only to the students but also to a variety of other people’s needs. On this tour, these interested parties include the schoolteacher and the partner-interpreter. Second, in contrast to the classroom, the students change but the subject matter remains constant. Thus the emphasis appears to shift from comprehension of the subject matter to comprehension of the audience. Finally, the importance of place seems critical to the process of museum education, in which the “text” literally surrounds the students. Gord’s escorting the students to different parts of the museum may be equivalent to skimming the text. Issues of representation and selection become choices amongst an existing repertoire rather than the development of new options. I will pursue these observations both at the conclusion to this chapter and again in Chapters Eight and Nine, in a discussion of the knowledge bases that underlie interpreter understandings.

**Jennifer's Tour**

**SYNOPSIS**

Moving to the second tour at the Community History Museum, the characters in this tour account are Jennifer, one of the teacher-participants in this study; Grace, Jennifer’s partner for this tour and a long-time interpreter at the site; and twenty-two grade 10 students
accompanied by their history teacher, a young woman. Two other high-school teachers who have written a textbook for grade 10 join the group after the tour begins.

The setting is the Community History Museum on a cold, snowy weekday morning in late winter. The Titanic exhibit, a travelling exhibition mounted for a brief period, has been popular beyond the site's wildest expectations, with an ensuing increase in booked tours as well as casual visitors. In preparation, the Education Coordinator has written a new tour outline and has sponsored a half-day training session on the exhibit and the tour. This is only the third time Jennifer has conducted the tour. On this occasion, she is working with Grace, a veteran interpreter like herself. Both know that the group are high-school students from a neighbouring community who will be going to the movie Titanic, immediately following the tour.

Jennifer is working from a program description, designed by the Education Coordinator for use by grades 6 through O.A.C. It is a four-page document that outlines the goals, themes, and activities listed below along with sample questions to be posed to the students. As with Time Trekkers, a worksheet is an integral part of the program. In this case it is designed to be the student's "ticket" for the Titanic. The following is a very brief outline intended to suggest the emphases and structure desired by the museum:

**The Titanic School Program**

**Goals**
- Introduce students to the value of museums: collecting, display, conservation, and education.
- Explore the artifacts and documents of the Titanic exhibit and discuss: social history, communication, transportation, and technology.
- Promote values, decision-making, teamwork and critical thinking in students viewing the exhibit.

**Outline**

**Welcome** 5 minutes
("museum manners," tour outline, information about the collection)

**Tour & Workbook** 55 minutes
Introduction 10 minutes
Exhibit viewing, discussion 15 minutes
Communications 5 minutes
Newspaper activity 15 minutes
Worksheet 10 minutes

Classroom 55 minutes
Video clip 15 minutes
Introduction to documents 5 minutes
Activities 40 minutes (variable)

General Conclusion 5 minutes

On this tour, Jennifer and Grace greet the students in the foyer and divide them into two groups. Jennifer starts her tour in the Interactive Gallery with the Classroom segment. She and Grace have agreed beforehand that neither will show the video clip, for reasons discussed below. As Jennifer’s tour progresses, more than the usual number of casual visitors come and go and two late-arriving schoolteachers join the group. After about forty-five minutes spent doing activities, Jennifer leads her group into the Titanic exhibit, where she asks them to complete their worksheets by looking at the display. As they are doing this, she walks around the gallery talking to them individually and in small groups. Finally she gathers them back together and sets them a group assignment regarding the class system on the Titanic. They do this, quickly reporting back. In closing, Jennifer rushes to pick up free passes for a return visit before bidding them goodbye as they hurry out the door on the way to see the movie.

Tour Account

The following account is based on one of five tours I followed with Jennifer. Again I present it in its entirety because it captures the nature of a special exhibit tour offered for only a short time. Jennifer has not had time to develop the easy familiarity with the tour that is evident in Gord’s Time Trekkers. The tour is also interesting because it is atypical both in its popularity amongst high-school students and those who book programs for them and in its link to contemporary popular culture.

Jennifer, dressed in a chenille sweater with her name tag pinned on, straight pants, and leather running shoes, stands in the lobby of the museum, a slight figure amongst forty-five high-
school students. She approaches the schoolteacher who is with the group to discuss whether the boys wearing baseball caps will be asked to remove them.

The group is divided in two by the schoolteacher and Grace, Jennifer’s partner-interpreter, leads her group upstairs. Jennifer waits for a moment and then follows with her group.

As they leave the schoolteacher asks the receptionist, “There are two more teachers joining us. Could you send them up with our group, please?”

**INTERACTIVE GALLERY**

Jennifer leads her group through the Travel and Farming Galleries to the Interactive Gallery, skirting the central Titanic Gallery. As noted before, the Interactive Gallery is a large windowless room about twenty feet square. There is an exhibit mounted on the walls and in several exhibit cases around the room.

Jennifer stands beside the video monitor at the front of the room. Most of the students sit down on the floor, some are on chairs, and some are standing at back.

“Don’t worry about the chairs,” Jennifer begins. “We’ll be moving around in a moment. Turn this way, please. Does everybody have a worksheet and a pencil? Welcome! My name is Jennifer. Welcome to the museum. It’s good to have a group from your part of the community come over here. You’re going to see the movie after? . . . How many have seen it? . . . Great. A lot of people think we planned the exhibit to coincide with the movie, but it’s just a coincidence. The first Sunday it was open we were overwhelmed by visitors—over five hundred people—and there continue to be crowds of people coming to see it. . . . Now we’ve certainly had other disasters, what is the fascination for the Titanic?”

Jennifer and the students discuss the factors. She stands with papers in one arm, her other arm free. She gestures as she speaks and walks back and forth across the gallery.

“What we’re going to do now—there are three different centres around the room . . . . This is the S.O.S. centre . . . Refer to the book. Copy that and put it into your work sheet. Over here . . . in this section there are three different folders . . . You’ll be looking through the documents. A number of inquiries were set up after the sinking . . . Take this information and put it in your worksheet. We’ll only spend about five to seven minutes at each station so everyone will have a chance to try everything . . . . Over here—at the table—there is a map and an instruction sheet . . . . Your challenge is to . . . . Make sure you follow the doors and passageways. There are four sheets here so you can work in pairs. Okay, let’s split up into three groups.”

Students move to each area.

Jennifer is at the document station. “Switch it around . . . .” she tells the group as she opens a folder and takes out some of the documents. The schoolteacher joins the same group and there is general discussion.
"How 'ya doing?" Jennifer asks the group at the map station. She stands beside their table as the group describes what they have done so far.

"Yeah, we died," one student at the map station says to the other.

"Can we keep these?" another student asks Jennifer, referring to the maps. She assures him that he can.

Jennifer turns to the group as a whole and asks them to move to the next station.

"Jennifer—what does USC stand for?" the schoolteacher asks her.

Jennifer answers her question and then turns back to help the new map group. There are fewer students in the group this time. Jennifer sits down with them and leans over the table. She gestures at the map and looks directly at the students.

Four boys walk around the gallery. "Hey guys, have you done this one?", the schoolteacher asks them.

"This is part of the grade 10 history unit on the turn-of-the-century period," the schoolteacher explains to Jennifer. "They've been doing some role-playing in class already and they'll be doing a presentation in class on Thursday. We also have a visitor coming on Thursday—with slides and such—and he'll be talking about the Titanic, too. It'll be a kind of follow-up to this visit. And it's good timing—right before March Break! It's been very popular. There was even a waiting list to come on this trip . . ."

Two more teachers come in. They are the authors of a grade 10 history text and teacher's manual. They apologize for being late because of the weather and ask the schoolteacher what they can do to help. She describes the activity stations to them. The three move away and begin talking about the driving conditions.

The noise level in the room is rising. A casual visitor with a small child comes into the Gallery. They look around for a bit and the adult asks Jennifer if they can use the CD-ROM in the room.

Jennifer looks at her watch just as Grace's group begins to enter the gallery. Jennifer asks her group to tidy up and leads them into the next gallery.

**TITANIC GALLERY**

The *Titanic* Exhibit is in a slightly larger gallery. Exhibits on the walls are interspersed by glass cases with artifacts in them. There are four platforms against the walls with large artifacts on them—deck chair, steamer trunk, and table. In the centre of the room there are two pillars with labels on them.

Jennifer stands at the far side of the room as the group enters. Most of the students arrange themselves around her in a loose semicircle. A few walk around the room.

"If I could have your attention for a minute, please . . . ," she begins. "Everything here belongs to the collector. You might have seen the newspaper article on him . . . In your work books there's a section called Gallery Observations. Look for the answers to those questions."
"Caps off, please," the schoolteacher calls out.
"You're not in history?" Jennifer asks one student.
"No, I was last term," she replies. "I just came to see the movie today."
"Look at the watch over here . . . . What time did the ship sink?" Jennifer asks a group standing by the case.
"Where's the diamond?" another student asks.
"That's just fiction. That's the part of the movie that they made up," Jennifer replies.
"Excuse me, Jennifer," the schoolteacher calls from across the room. "Can you tell us about this life jacket?"

Most of the students are walking around while filling in their worksheets. The teacher talks with a few of them. A small group of boys stands by the doorway, talking and listening to a Walkman. Jennifer stands looking around the room. The schoolteachers approach and ask her about the number of bodies found in the water and the differences as to how bodies were handled according to class.

After a few minutes, Jennifer moves to the narrow end of the gallery, in front of the main exhibit panel, and asks the students to gather around her.

"Was everyone able to get everything?" she asks the group, referring to the worksheet. "Fifth Officer Lowe—what do you know about him?" She goes on to talk about the time period of the exhibit and then tells them, "What I want you to do—just quickly—is to get into four groups. You'll each represent one class—first, second, third class—and the crew. Look around the gallery for information specific to your group. You might ask where you're from. Where you're going. Why? What's the food like? You can make a story about it and then come back and tell us what it was like. I'll divide you up . . . . I don't know guys—are you first class?" There is general laughter from the group.

Jennifer talks to the first-class group. The schoolteachers talk amongst themselves. The students move around the room in small groups and appear to be discussing the assignment.

"Okay, guys—let's get back together," Jennifer calls out. "Okay—quickly . . . . Ssssh. We can get started . . . . Grade tens! Let's start off with the first class. While they're speaking everyone should be listening." The groups report back briefly.

A student asks, "What time is it? Doesn't it take a while to get there?"
"Okay—we're at eleven o'clock now. Time to head off!" replies Jennifer.

The students leave the gallery quickly.

The two late-arriving schoolteachers ask Jennifer questions about the jail until the first teacher tells them it's time to go. As they are leaving, Jennifer remembers the free admission cards for the students and runs to get them. As they depart, she wishes them all a "great time" at the movies.
Jennifer comprehends the content of her tour to be the story of the Titanic as depicted in the museum’s special exhibit. As she says, we “take the exhibits . . . and exchange this information with the students” (Int-HMJ2, 41-42). Her purpose is not only to help students “understand conditions from an historical point of view in order to understand why our approach is so different today” (FN-HMJ1, 386-88) but also to have them leave with an image of the museum as a leisure time destination—“It’s fun . . . and I’d like to go back there” (FN-HMJ4, 379).

Jennifer’s advance preparation for this tour emphasizes the script. Unlike Gord, she does not reconsider the information already available to her nor does she question the structure and segmentation of the material. Instead, she moves quickly along with her partner-interpreter, Grace, into consideration of the representation of the key ideas and the selection of appropriate instructional methods. For Jennifer this is one of the critical differences between an expert and an interpreter: “. . . there are people that are so knowledgeable and informative and have all sorts of information but they stand up in front of a group of people and they deliver it—and it’s so dry that people just get turned off” (Int-HMJ2, 93-96).

Reviewing the tour booking, Jennifer and Grace have discovered that the group will be going to see Titanic, the movie, right after visiting the museum:

We knew that they were going to the movie afterwards so they had to be out by a certain time. So, right away “Okay, I have to cut back a little bit.” . . . (Int-HMJ2, 621-26)

To conserve time, they decided not to run the video, which is a large component of the classroom activities (Int-HMJ2, 632-38). Jennifer chooses to focus instead on storytelling, because “there are so many interesting stories and there are so many events that you want to share . . .” (Int-HMJ1, 890-91). Through this she achieves her purpose of making the museum “come alive” for students (Int-HMJ1, 923-25). She emphasizes hands-on
activities that allow students both to participate in the story and to learn more about being in a museum.

... [W]e were talking about passengers on the ship and looking right to somebody and saying ‘Okay, now, you ARE this person. YOU’RE the third class. YOU’RE sitting down there. YOU’RE being locked down there. How is that you’re feeling?’ So you’re drawing them into the program—that it’s not just passive—that they are actually participating as well. (Int-HMJ2, 111–17)

This is challenging for her because the real artifacts are not accessible: “[W]hen you have [the artifacts] tucked in behind cases sometimes the stories aren’t easily told” (Int-HMJ1, 1013-4).

Also important to the interpreters’ considerations has been adaptation to what they suppose will be the student characteristics:

With this senior high-school group they might be a little bit more into the movie version rather than the actual event. So what can we talk about? What can I incorporate into this one—with the high-school kids? (Int-HMJ2, 579–87)

However, Jennifer feels limited by lack of knowledge of these specific learners. Much of what she knows is a generic understanding of teenagers this age, based on her own children and on experiences with other tour groups.

Of course, sometimes [your planning] gets all thrown out the door when you think you’re going to get a group that are going to be real duds and they turn out to be real keen kids. (Int-HMJ2, 579–87)

Once the group arrives, Jennifer moves to also adapt to the schoolteacher’s characteristics and needs. Jennifer has had little contact with her beforehand, having only the information provided on the booking sheet by the museum’s receptionist after a conversation with the teacher or whoever booked the tour (Int-HMJ2, 603–10). She seeks to ensure that the schoolteacher will be happy with the tour through a process of negotiation in which both of them are trying to gain an instant understanding of the needs and limitations of the other and respond to them:

Right away you establish, “Hi, I’m Jennifer. Welcome to the museum.” And they’ll introduce themselves. “Glad to have you come.” And you try to find out from them ... “Are you beginning the unit or are you towards the end?” and trying to get a sense of what’s going to happen. And sometimes
they'll say, "Well, what's the schedule and what's happening here this morning?" And you kind of run through with them what will be taking place... (Int-HMJ2, 775-805)

Jennifer's instruction focuses on the activities and exhibit viewing rather than the worksheet. Like Gord, there is a link between her comprehension of the script and the style of teaching she employs. For example, the dramatic element of her teaching is evident in her decision to skirt the Titanic Gallery on first pass so that the students would have an "oooh, ahhh" experience when they entered at their designated time (HMJ2, 975-92).

On this tour we see Jennifer's evaluation and adjustment for experiences expressed in her changes over time to the map station as described in the completion of her time in the Interactive Gallery. She takes her past experience with the tour and applies it to change the activity for the present students:

"Okay, this is happening here. What can I do? Maybe I can add something to this activity that will make it a little bit longer."... [B]ecause it takes so much time and some of them are kind of frustrated—and it does take a long time to sit there and go over all of the [rules]... So I've found... by splitting that group up into [two] smaller groups and then appealing to the kids' sense of challenge and having a contest to see which group can get to the top fastest... they've concentrated a bit more. (Int-HMJ2, 1208-36)

We also see her checking for student understanding and interest and adjusting during her tour:

I made the decision that with these kids being high-school students that they—after listening already, after being in the Interactive—that it would be better for them to go off on their own to work on their worksheet and have that little bit of freedom rather than, "Okay, come and listen to me again for a few minutes and THEN you're going to break off to do your own thing". ... I just keep on moving around the room all the time. Again, just sort of watching—not so much there to make sure everybody's doing what they're supposed to do but just if anybody has any questions or can't find this. Just to keep on monitoring and moving around... I had made that decision that they had already had that formal "with me" period so they need just to have a little bit of [time on their own]. And you could see that they were talking about the movie... They were starting to focus now on the movie. (Int-HMJ2, 1464-88)

Unlike Gord, there is little evident concern for the schoolteacher's evaluation. This may have more to do with the difference between the high-school and elementary groups than with a difference in teaching practice between Gord and Jennifer. Senior high-school
students are perhaps better able to articulate their own needs and interests than are elementary students.

Finally, Jennifer pauses at the end of her tour to reflect upon her performance. She is particularly concerned about the lack of closure because she values it in principle but was unable to achieve it this time. For her, closure is important not only because the ending is an integral part of the tour, for which the students have paid, but also because she likes to sum up with more stories and anecdotes. She sees that final sharing time as her "reward" for doing a good tour, because that is when she can sense if she has made any impact on these students:

And I’ve had kids that have said, “I really wasn’t thrilled about having to come here but it was lots of fun and I’d like to come back!” Good. Alright! And that’s great. That’s the best. (Int-HMJ2, 1752–1806)

However, she is concerned that such evaluation and reflection does not necessarily lead to new comprehension:

I know [learning from my own teaching] happens, and I say it happens but to actually put my finger on [it] . . . Well, when you have a child who seems sullen . . . maybe a few years ago I would have been quite upset. “Why is this person like this?” And just now, feeling comfortable that that’s okay. If the person’s going to look like that and they’re going to look miserable, don’t worry about it . . . . And again, that’s the maturing process and that’s feeling comfortable in what you are doing. Because when you start out you have that, “Uh-oh, why are they looking that way?!?” and “They’re not happy here. Is it the program? They don’t like being here?” Whereas now it doesn’t bother me—in that way. ‘Cause you’re dealing with teachers—you’re dealing with the public—you learn to deal that way. I can say “Oh, I’ve learned all sorts of things!” [laughs] . . . But I can’t put my finger on it! And that’s hard. (Int-HMJ2, 370–89)

Summary

In Jennifer’s tour, issues emerge related to the aesthetic of teaching in a museum. In Chapter Two I discussed the concept of artistic practice as one in which teachers make judgements based on the “qualities” that unfold during the course of action. Teachers “read” and respond to these qualities, thereby reshaping their practice (Eisner 1994). While such activity is not dominated by prescriptions or routines, it does respect them. Artistic
practice, Eisner argues, emerges from this tension between “automaticity and inventiveness” (p. 155) or between structure and chaos (p. 162). He likens such practice to a game like basketball in which there are rules but where, within those parameters, exploration and risk-taking are encouraged (p. 162). Similarly, although Jennifer tends to follow the tour outline, she conceptualizes her tour in terms of time “with me” and time “on their own.” Like Gord’s transformation of content knowledge through segmentation of the tour based upon teaching spaces, Jennifer’s transformation seems linked to her conception of the purposes of the museum. Her time “with me” is an exchange of information through the medium of storytelling, heightened by the drama of the Titanic Gallery. But she also allows space for solitary looking.

A second point I wish to make here is that Jennifer is clearly aware of the “quality” of time “with me”/“on their own” and may be becoming a “connoisseur” (Eisner 1991, 85) of the museum experience. However, she is stymied when it comes to informed criticism of her own work. As Jennifer says, “I can’t quite put my finger on it.” She is unable to “transform the qualities of a . . . [tour] into a public form that illuminates, interprets, and appraises the qualities that have been experienced” (p. 86). I will return to these points below.

**Helen’s Tour**

**SYNOPSIS**

The characters in this tour account are Helen, a teacher-participant; Judy, her partner-interpreter; a young male schoolteacher; and thirty grade 6 students from a local school.

The tour takes place in the Community History Museum in the early afternoon of a warm spring weekday. The Titanic exhibit described in Jennifer’s Tour is still on and is just as popular. As Helen’s tour begins, two other tours are just concluding. Casual visitors pass in a steady stream through the foyer on their way to see the special exhibit.
This is the third time that Helen has conducted the tour. Like Jennifer, she is working from the program description designed by the Education Coordinator for use by grades 6 through O.A.C..

On this occasion Helen discovers at the last minute that although they have prepared for thirty-five grade 6 students, in fact, sixty are expected. As she scrambles to assemble sufficient materials, the schoolteacher arrives with his group. The two interpreters decide to present a joint introduction in the Meeting Room before dividing the group. Helen’s group first visits the Titanic Gallery, where they look at the exhibit, talk, and complete the worksheet. Partially to accommodate Judy in the Interactive Gallery, Helen leads her group downstairs to visit the Jail Gallery. As a result, they arrive back in the Interactive Gallery with little time left to do the planned activities. Despite the time constraints, the group views part of the video and Helen takes up the answers to the worksheet’s “Video Notes” questions. She then decides to simply explain the activities available and allow the group to move about on their own, rather than formally rotate as we saw on Jennifer’s tour.

Throughout the group’s time here, casual visitors and staff come and go, frequently interacting with Helen. Finally the schoolteacher calls an end to the tour, as the bus is waiting. Thanking Helen, they quickly pack up and leave.

Tour Account

This is one of three tours I followed with Helen. Because it is based on the same script as Jennifer’s tour, it presents an interesting contrast. Differences are evident both in the abilities and interests of these grade 6 students as compared to Jennifer’s grade 10 class as well as in the accommodation required for Helen to meet the needs of Judy, her partner-interpreter. These differences force Helen to go “off-script” and to improvise in ways that she feels are not always successful (Int-HMH4, n.p.).

Helen is dressed in a floral print dress and white running shoes. Her hair is done up in a ponytail. She and Judy, her partner-interpreter, meet in the Titanic Gallery and make
arrangements for the tour—who will use the video first and who the gallery. Helen wants to do the jail in the middle of the tour. They discuss using the Meeting Room as a place to start.

Helen goes downstairs to check the booking and discovers there are sixty students coming rather than the expected thirty-five. There is a flurry of gathering extra materials. In the midst of this, the schoolteacher arrives with the booked group. He and Helen talk for a moment and she asks him to keep the group outside. At the same time, a casual visitor asks Helen about running the video in the Interactive Gallery upstairs. She goes to help and then returns.

"We're really excited about this tour," the schoolteacher tells her. "We've been working on this unit for a couple of weeks. We're even doing some role-playing."

Helen asks him to bring in the group and have them leave hats and bags on the rack.

**MEETING ROOM**

Helen leads the group up the main stairwell to the Meeting Room on the second floor, adjoining the Titanic Gallery. It is a room about twenty-five feet square with windows on two walls.

Helen leans against a table as the whole group of sixty students crowds into the room. Most of the students sit in rows facing her. The adults with the group stand around the edges of the room.

"Hi! . . . What are you here to see today?" Helen begins. The group answers her.

"Great! My name is Helen and this is Judy . . . . Let me just explain how things will work before we start. How many have been here before? . . . Well, then you know about museum manners . . . Did I miss anything? Well, if we're ready to go . . . is there one class closer to the door? Judy, do you want to take that class?"

"Helen, can I suggest that they pick up the boards and pencils first?" Judy says.

"Good idea. Let's hand those out now—boards, pencils and sheets. . . . Everybody got a sheet? You're a passenger. Put your name on it. . . . Your real name. Don't fill it out now. Just listen. See the Video Notes? The group with Judy will start there. The group with me will start on the inside."

Half of the students get up and file out of the room, picking up boards and pencils as they go. The remaining students are sitting on the floor. Some are filling out the worksheets.

"Guys, don't fill it out yet!" Helen cautions them. "We'll be going into the gallery in a minute. But before we do that, I want to give you some information. It can be distracting in the gallery. Has anybody been to this exhibit before?" Only four or five students raise their hands, so Helen goes on to explain about the collector and the original material in the exhibit. Then she leads them into the adjacent gallery.

**TITANIC GALLERY**

Helen leads her group into the Gallery, positioning herself at the far end of the room in front of the exhibit title panel.
"I'm numbering off now—one, two, three, four," Helen tells them as they enter. "Watch I don't number you more than once!" She taps each student on the head and gives him or her a number, then the schoolteacher tells them which corner to go to. "Ready?" Helen continues. "You're first class. You're second class. You're third class and you're crew." Each group of students raises a cheer after their appointment.

"You're going to have to hold it down," chides the schoolteacher. "I'm sorry! Just hold it down."

The students quiet down and move into their assigned groups, facing Helen. She explains the class system and how it manifested itself on the Titanic. She asks a couple of questions relating to class but receives little response.

"These questions about classes and accommodations—I guess it's old news for you?" she asks them. "This is the gallery with all the stuff. It's kind of a scavenger hunt. Look for information for your worksheets."

The students fan out around the gallery. They hold clipboards and make notes on the worksheets. Helen walks around the gallery, looking at what the students are doing, then stops to talk to the teacher. "Is there anything you'd like me to focus on?" she asks.

"No," he replies. "We're at the end of this unit. We've really studied it a lot but they're still keen on any aspect."

"What about the manners of the time?"

"Yes, that would be fine. We really haven't spent too much time on that. Really more on the sinking. How long will they have in this exhibit?"

"About twenty minutes more. Then maybe we'll visit the jail if the other group is not quite finished. We don't have to, but most kids are interested in it."

"No, that sounds good," he replies and then goes back to looking at the exhibit on his own.

Helen moves amongst the group, standing behind groups of students as they are working. Some ask her questions. She leaves and comes back with an information packet for the teacher.

"This is great!" the teacher responds. "Well, it's a depressing subject but it really is interesting. . . . It's just incredible that people really went through it."

"I don't know if I've given you anything new," says Helen.

Helen stands away from the group and watches them. A student approaches her for help regarding a question on the worksheet. Helen refers her to the labels.

Judy comes in to talk to Helen about the timing and when she will be finished.

"These labels were done at this museum," Helen explains to me. "The ones that came with the exhibit were kind of worn out. So I think these labels will stay with it now. I'm kind of pleased that some of the research I did—about the cook—was used in that case."
"Guys!" Helen calls out to the group. "All you have to be working on now is the Titanic exhibition. We'll do the rest later."

The students are sitting on the floor and leaning against the walls while making notes on their worksheets. A parent reminds a student that he is not supposed to work ahead. The schoolteacher is walking around the gallery glancing over students' shoulders and looking at the worksheets.

"What about this question?" a parent asks Helen, pointing at the work sheet. "They've got everything but that one. We can't seem to find this photograph."

"I can't remember just where that is. But let me take a look," Helen replies as she moves into the gallery. "Here it is! There—you can see the third class cabin—the bunk fits under the sink."

The noise level in the room is rising. Helen is walking back and forth. She stands in front of the title panel and asks everyone to gather in front of her.

"Any questions about what you saw in the galleries? . . . All old hat, eh?" she begins. Several students speak up. "Any other questions? No? Then I want to tell you about . . . Can everybody hear me? I feel as if I'm competing with the other room." Noise emanates from the adjacent gallery.

"It's a couple of minutes before we switch with the other group," Helen continues. "I want to show you the jail. It was built in 1867 and in use until 1977." The students respond enthusiastically.

"Just a minute, please; you said 1867," he says to Helen and then turns to the class. "Why is that an important date? I'll give you seventy zillion bonus points! . . . Come on, you've just spent four months studying this wonderful country!"

Finally one student answers correctly. Helen finishes her introduction to the Jail and then leads the group down the stairs.

**JAIL GALLERY**

The students wander about in the gallery, going into the restored cell and into the doctor's office. There is a fair bit of noise. Helen stands at the end of the space near the exhibit label. The schoolteacher asks her what happened to the lifeboats from the Titanic.

"Losing focus!" Helen says in an aside to me and then turns to the group. "Okay, guys! A little bit more information . . . You guys were so focused upstairs . . ."

"Guys, kneel down," the schoolteacher tells the group.

The students kneel or sit on the carpet, some sit on bench along the wall and a few remain standing. Helen discusses jail life and hangings and then answers questions.

"One last question?" Helen takes the question and then continues, "I want to head upstairs now. There's still Titanic stuff to do. Any burning questions? No?"
She leads the group back up main staircase and through the Titanic Gallery, where the other half of their larger group is working now, on into the Interactive Gallery.

**INTERACTIVE GALLERY**

The group files in and sits down in several rows, facing the video monitor. Most adults sit on chairs at the back. A casual visitor browses the exhibits.

"Class, you're going to be needing the Video Notes now," the schoolteacher says, standing by the video monitor. "You had great focus in the Titanic exhibit but you lost it in jail a bit. We'll be collecting these worksheets and taking them back to school, so I want you to focus now. We only have about half an hour. We haven't seen this video yet."

As they are watching, Helen talks to the casual visitor for a moment. Then she checks out the stations around the room. As she is doing this, the casual visitor approaches her again. More casual visitors come in. Then Judy, her partner-interpreter, comes in holding a package and talks to Helen. Helen switches off the video.

"I'm going to stop it there. We're a little pressed for time. Did you all get the answers?"

"No!" the students protest.

Helen takes up the answers on the Video Notes section.

"We're a little pressed for time," she says to the schoolteacher. "Do you have to leave at precisely two o'clock? Yes? Okay. We'll do it a little differently then—a little more casual..." Helen walks around the gallery and explains each station to the group as a whole—except for one that she says they can do back at school. There are four stations: Survivors, Titanic Game, Death Chart, and General Information.

"Look around at all this stuff in the order that you like," she tells them. Many of the students go to what Helen has described as "the game" laid out on the table.

The director and the curator of the museum come in and load a CD-ROM onto a computer. A parent takes photos of the students working. Helen walks amongst the students until the director asks her to help him with the CD-ROM. While she is doing that a casual visitor asks the director about the nationalities of those on the Titanic. The noise level in the room rises.

Several boys from the group are playing on the floor with a set of building materials.

"One more minute, ladies and gentlemen," the schoolteacher calls out. "And then we're going to leave. You guys making the ship?" he says to the group on the floor. "Don't forget the boilers. Folks, put things back where they go if you guys want to catch your buses tonight!"

The students slowly begin to tidy up.

"Pencils and boards over here," orders the schoolteacher. "Keep the sheets! Let's go back down to where we came in." Turning to Helen, he says, "That was excellent!"
He leads his group back downstairs where they quickly collect jackets and hats. Helen stands at the side of foyer to bid them goodbye.

**Pedagogical Reasoning Behind Helen's Tour**

Helen understands the content of the tour to be the “magnitude and the human element” of the Titanic disaster (Int-HMH3, 715–45). Her purpose is to give schoolchildren “as much information as possible on the topic” (Int-HMH2, 27–64). At the same time, however, she wants people to share in her delight in the artifacts, the “old stuff” (Int-HMH1, 685). She wants the tour to be an “enjoyable experience,” “to be light and approachable,” so that schoolchildren will come back and visit the museum on their own time (Int-HMH2, 27–64).

Although she has not reviewed her notes specifically for this tour, Helen has been preparing it for a long time. Before the installation of the exhibit, she was part of the site’s research team looking for “unusual facts that could be put into the exhibit” (Int-HMH2, 613–29). These were viewed as discrete bits of information that would supplement the interpretive material provided with the loan exhibit. Interestingly, in preparation she also structures and segments the tour in a conceptually different way than it has been presented to her by the Education Coordinator. Like Gord, Helen considers there to be three “stages of the tour: “They HAVE to see the gallery, they HAVE to do the jail, they HAVE to have exposure to the activities” (Int-HMH3, 239–41). These stages are bookended by an introduction and a conclusion, although the conclusion is frequently missed because “you USUALLY run out of time” (Int-HMH3, 263). This concept of the tour is reflected in her original decision to visit the Jail Gallery even though it is not part of the tour outline.

In terms of the representation of her themes, she considers this to be the transmission of facts from her, as instructor, to the students as learners (Int-HMH2, 83). Consistent with the transformation above, she also thinks about where and when she might use the museum spaces to transmit these facts: “. . . where I want to start, where in the museum, which location, which room I want to start on, which topic I want to start on,
maybe the major things I want to cover, things that I DEFINITELY want to talk about and things that I might leave out . . . a rough outline in my head (Int-HMH3, 43–48).

However, Helen recognizes the need to coordinate room and equipment use with her partner-interpreter, Judy (Int-HMH3, 160–67). On this tour she is confused by Judy’s wish to conduct her group’s activities in the second floor meeting room rather than in the Interactive Gallery, and so vetoes it. They do agree that Helen will go to the Jail area in the middle of the tour, ostensibly to accommodate more time for Judy in the Interactive Gallery. But Helen also likes to visit the Jail because “everybody seems to be interested in it and it goes over well” (Int-HMH3, 242–46).

She avoids using some of the museum spaces because they are not conducive to teaching. For example, in the lobby “EVERYBODY can hear you . . . it’s a place where someone’s going to come in to ask for information, the phones are going to ring, there’s other stuff that needs to be done. I don’t really consider the lobby a place [for] groups” (Int-HMH3, 578–89).

On these bases, she selects certain instructional forms and methods upon which to concentrate. Like Gord, Helen chooses to focus on the tour worksheet because it “adds a stable element to the tour” (Int-HMH3, 640–50). She feels that the worksheet gets the students “looking at things in a little bit more depth” so that they will not be done in a couple of minutes (Int-HMH3, 640–50). She feels they also allow for classroom follow-up by the schoolteacher, if he or she should choose to do that (Int-HMH3, 689). Furthermore, she finds that coordination with Judy demands a more structured approach to the tour, more of following it “by the book”. Helen finds that the students and schoolteachers expect that both halves of the group will do exactly the same thing during their visit (Int-HMH3, 1084–100). When she is the sole interpreter on a tour, she can be more flexible (Int-HMH3, 1204).

On this tour Helen has worried less about adaptation to either student or schoolteacher characteristics although she usually tries to keep a tour “on line to what the
teacher's expecting, obviously. Because they're there for a program and they want certain objectives met" (Int-HMH2, 61-63). Most often her main concern is the amount of knowledge the students bring to the subject of the tour. "[I]t's nice to know before starting if you're jumping in as a review or if you're not." However she has discovered on previous Titanic tours that "everybody seems to have a background anyway . . . They all know everything" (Int-HMH3, 444-69). Helen is still concerned about the style of discipline that will be required for this older elementary group; she finds she tends to be more rigid and structured in her approach to older and larger groups (Int-HMH3, 377-429). Once they arrive, Helen begins to tailor the tour to the group as she reads them. We see her shift gears in the Titanic Gallery as, getting little response to her questions about class, she cuts off that discussion and frees them to look around the gallery on their own (Int-HMH3, 799):

"These questions about classes and accommodations—I guess it's old news for you?" she asks them. "This is the gallery with all the stuff. It's kind of a scavenger hunt. Look for information for your worksheets."

Like other interpreters, Helen's instruction tends to follow the script. There is a strong emphasis on both halves of the group doing the same things as, for instance, when Helen chooses to show the video despite the limited time remaining (Int-HMH3, 1098). However, there are certain choices she makes that reveal her own approach to teaching. For example, she purposefully directs students with questions to the labels where they might find the answers, in order that they will learn how to look on their own:

... [I]f every time they ask a question I answer it, then they're not going to look. They're just going to come up to you every time they can't find something or every time "I don't know where this is." You don't want thirty kids coming at you asking you questions with every question. . . . And once you show one of them where it is, if they see someone else looking for the same thing then THEY will direct them, whereas that person would have come to you again. (Int-HMH3, 880-89)

But it is not a satisfying tour for her. She finds the activities on this day to be "kind of lame—[they] didn't really go anywhere" (Int-HMH3, 757-99). Several times she comments to the students that "it's all old hat, eh?" Thus she stands back to evaluate her
own performance and tries to adjust on the basis of her self-evaluation. She feels that "[this] group was really pretty much on their own" but finds herself at a loss as to what to do in this unfamiliar circumstance. She finds herself to be "very superfluous with this group . . . [u]sually they’re focused on YOU and what you have to say, and here is a group with one eye on me and one eye on the artifacts" (Int-HMH3, 931–52). Despite her stated purpose to have students appreciate the museum’s artifacts, she perceives this to be a negative outcome. Instead, she tries again to give them "something different" in the way of more information about the sinking of the Titanic. "But they didn’t seem to WANT it", she says (Int-HMH3, 979–87).

Late in the tour the schoolteacher makes evaluative comments that also influence Helen’s teaching. Although he agreed to the jail visit, he now sees that there is little time remaining for the Titanic-related activities and begins to assert more control over the class in order that they may complete the Video Notes. At the same time, Helen feels that her time in the Interactive Gallery has been truncated by Judy’s occupation of the space. In her opinion, the group has been short-changed but she does not see what can be done about it other than simply proceeding with the program as best she can (Int-HMH3, 1028–45). Taking up the worksheet assumes more importance than the hands-on activities.

Reflecting upon the tour at its conclusion, Helen focuses on ways that she could rearrange the activities that have been set out in the script. Although she finds herself to be “comfortable with the gallery space and with the information” and able to “draw on past experience and pull out stuff here and there” (Int-HMH1, 415–26), she is restricted in her critical analysis by her comprehension of the subject matter as well as by her repertoire of strategies: “I guess a lot of what we do in the museum is the same thing over and over again. So once you’ve done it once or twice, you’re pretty comfortable with the knowledge . . . ”(Int-HMH2, 594–96).

At the conclusion of this tour, Helen comprehends that Judy wanted to use the Meeting Room more extensively because she felt she would have trouble with the timing
She recognizes that she had not experienced this particular problem before:

I had done the tour earlier but it was always alone. . . . so [time] wasn’t an issue. We just took the amount of time that was necessary. (Int-HMH3, 1200–6)

On subsequent tours, the two interpreters decide to address the issue of time by showing the video to both halves of the group at the same time, thereby leaving more time for activities (Int-HMH3, 185–94).

**Summary**

Helen responded to this tour account and analysis as follows:

Basically, I’m just rather embarrassed, because I think I sound like a blithering idiot— I “struggle” with this and I “grapple” with that. I cringe at what I apparently said. I’m not sure what you have down for me accurately reflects how I feel and teach but perhaps this is what came across at the time. (Int-HMH4, n.p.)

Yet through Helen there is an opportunity to see what a “messy” situation looks like for an interpreter in the “indeterminate zone of practice” (Schön 1987, 6). She is dealing with a group that is completely different from those with whom she has had prior experience.

Whereas the two other groups were willing to listen to her, in this case, “[H]ere is a group with one eye on me and one eye on the artifacts” (Int-HMH3, 931–52). Helen reflected with me later that she began the tour with the routine approach outlined in the script but was “surprised” (Schön 1987, 28) by the reaction of the group. Her “reflection-in-action” (p. 28) about this variation from the norm defines the problem as one of too few facts.

However, more facts do not solve the problem for her. Thereupon she reflects upon her actions later and determines that it is a problem of timing rather than content. She talks this over with Judy, her partner-interpreter, and they agree that to view the video together will solve the problem. While neither Helen nor Judy would view it so, I contend that by identifying and reflecting upon this problem they have become part of a “community of practice.” Their actions are grounded in a socially and institutionally-structured context
shared by the small community of practitioners (p. 33) that are the interpreters at the Community History Museum.

CASE ANALYSIS

A number of issues emerge from these tour accounts and the interpreters' pedagogical reasoning that follow them: issues having to do with understandings of the museum's subject matter, site, and learners. I will return to these in Chapters Eight and Nine in a discussion of the knowledge bases that underlie teacher thinking. However, in this segment and in the comparable segments in Chapters Six and Seven, I would like to focus on aspects of the "art of teaching" and the qualities of teaching that seemed to emerge from the practice of teacher-participants at each of the institutions.

The Common Aesthetic

One of the questions I posed in Chapter Two had to do with the "aesthetic" of the tour and the qualities to which interpreters, docents, and educators attend as expressed through their pedagogical reasoning. In this chapter it seems clear that the institutional traditions of the site do form a frame for the pedagogical reasoning of the interpreters. Significant choices about what, to whom, when, and, in some cases, where material will be taught may already have been made for them by the Education Coordinator. In developing tours and programs, the Education Coordinator makes choices, choices that may stem from her own principles of teaching and learning as well as from a host of other understandings: the expectations of senior staff, the school audience, the general public, and often the teacher-participants themselves, together with the weight of tradition, combine to create a powerful "box" for the Education Coordinator. This institutional framework is expressed through the prewritten tour outlines, program write-ups, and scripts, in addition to the recruitment and training of interpreters outlined in Chapter Four. Taken together, these choices form the
“common aesthetic” (Eisner 1985) or “dynamic form” (Barone 1983) of the tour and shape the experience of the teacher-participant. Teacher-participants base at least part of their own interpretation on this institutional imperative. It becomes all the more powerful when it is shared by others teaching at the same site (Barnes 1992, 31). However, at the same time, teacher-participants pay attention to certain ‘qualities’ of the museum that reflect their own understanding of the goals of the visit.

**Schooltime versus Owntime**

Clearly, the Community History Museum considers the three tours in this chapter to be “school tours.” Although stated objectives include an introduction to the museum, this is overwhelmed by the “school” qualities to which the interpreters are asked to attend, in particular, the worksheets that dominate the tours of Gord and Helen. All three interpreters frame the tours as school tours, as extensions of the classroom curriculum. Yet Jennifer’s concern that she balance “that formal ‘with me’ period” with student time on their own (Int-HMJ2, 1464–88) suggests that she may recognize another quality—that of “owntime” (Spock 2000a). For Jennifer, owntime serves to bridge the gap between the formal qualities of the school tour and the informal qualities of the self-directed museum visit. Through owntime students are enabled to develop and practice the skill of using the site on their own.

Various authors have explored the need for solitude in museum spaces (Kaplan, Bardwell et al. 1993; Buchholz 2000; Soren 2000; Spock 2000a) while others have argued for the application of “natural learning methods” to the school tour (Griffin and Symington 1997) yet little has been done to investigate incorporation into the school tour of the need to be alone for reverie and contemplation. The museum, gallery or park is seen as a ritual space (Duncan 1995), not only in the sense of performance but also in a more quiet, contemplative sense or restorative role (Kaplan, Bardwell et al. 1993). Museums maintain
this latter role as “temple” even as they provide “forum” space for confrontation, experimentation and debate (Soren 2000, 9).

As I will demonstrate in Chapter Nine, several of the teacher-participants in this study prefer to visit a museum, gallery, or park on their own. In this they are like many museum professionals who recall that childhood experiences of “being allowed to explore and discover on their own” made museums important to them (Spock 2000a, 18). Walt echoes this view:

So maybe if these kids someday come on their own—the Country Art Gallery’s kind of hard to get to, BUT get on a bus and go somewhere in the city, any art gallery it might happen to be, and wander around and do those things—they can do it. And if they do that, then you can teach them all this variety of things that can be in life. (Int-AGW1b, 313–318)

Several of the teacher-participants sought ways to incorporate own time for learners into their tours and programs, even though this was not a part of the script, outline, or program write-up. For example, Dwight conceptualizes a portion of the program as “hands-off me doing the presentation” (Int-NCD2, 1058–69) so that students may pursue their own interests, even if that just means socializing with one another. Walt feels the group must be allowed to “wander” and “look at things” and even “go shopping,” if that is what they want to do at the museum (Int-AGW2a, 1577–1606).

Yellis (1984) argued that “hands-off museum education,” his understanding of museum literacy, was the key to

... equipping visitors to establish their own relationships with the objects, collections and disciplines of the museum. It means, among other things, museum educators shifting their focus from what they should be doing to what they can do and, especially, what they should not do in order to free the visitor to do more. (p. 14)

Yellis concludes that, in such a situation, the museum educator’s role is to enable the visitor to “transform himself [sic] as we ourselves have been transformed.” Through this “the welfare and dignity of each individual has been held paramount, not the assertion of will or force of one over the other” (p. 22). I liken this to the concept of the “midwife-teacher” (Belenky et al. 1986) who supports students’ thinking, but does not do the thinking for
them or expect the student to think as they do (p. 218). The playing of this role, Belenky, Clinch, Goldberger, and Tarule contend, leads to a “connectedness” in the teacher-student relationship and a blurring between the personal and the professional (p. 224) that I feel is consistent with the idea of a community of learners.

That these teacher-participants accommodate through their teaching the need for owntime on the part of museum visitors suggests that they have an intuitive understanding of museum literacy and are developing ways to achieve that through their own practice. This is in the seeming absence of deliberate moves on the part of the respective institutions to encourage or reinforce such thinking. How then do they learn these teaching moves? In Chapter Nine I will explore the idea of learning to teach in the museum, gallery, or park from the perspective of the teacher-participants.
CHAPTER SIX

THE COUNTRY ART GALLERY—THE PEDAGOGICAL REASONING OF DOCENTS AND GALLERY EDUCATORS

In this chapter I extend my examination of the processes of pedagogical reasoning and actions within which the museum teacher’s knowledge is used to the docents/educators of the Country Art Gallery. The focus is on three tours, conducted by Joan, Bern, and Walt. As in Chapter Five, my aim was to understand the reasoning and actions behind the tour from the perspective of the museum teacher.

THE TOURS

Joan's Tour

SYNOPSIS

The characters in this tour account are Joan, one of the teacher-participants in the study; her two partner docent-educators on the tour; eleven grades 5 and 6 students; a parent; the schoolteacher; the Docent Coordinator; and, briefly, several casual visitors.

The setting is the Country Art Gallery, which was described more fully in Chapter Four. It is a warm spring weekday morning and, as always at this time of year, the gallery is being visited by many booked school groups and casual visitors or tourists. "Looking at Landscape" is a popular tour and one that Joan has conducted many times before. It is part of a day-long program during which the group spends the first half-hour outside with their
own schoolteacher. The group follows the Looking at Landscape tour, has lunch, and then participates in a studio art session in the afternoon.

Looking at Landscape was developed by the Education Officer to meet the needs of students in grades 4 to 9. The following outline is accompanied by several pages of more detailed information on the nature of the tour as well as a 'how-to' for the accompanying activities:

**Looking at Landscape Tour**

**Goals**

- To offer students an enjoyable and personally meaningful interaction with art in a museum setting.
- To provide students with the tools and confidence to look at, talk about and interpret works of art.
- To familiarize students with the particular characteristics of the genre of landscape painting featured at this museum.
- To provide students with the opportunity to create their own landscape work.

**Learning Outcomes**

"While the following outcomes are all important the first three should be considered after each tour for self-assessment . . . "

Through activities, games, and directed observation and discussion of landscape paintings . . . students will be able to:

- know and be able to use the basic elements of design and art vocabulary
- understand how artists manipulate media and design elements to express ideas and impressions . . .
- know about the artists, their work and the context in which their work is viewed
- know about the meaning and significance of art museums and collections in their lives and cultures
- understand why artists choose to paint landscapes
- understand how these artists solved artistic problems similar to those they are experiencing
- make comparisons between their works and these artists as well as appreciate the variety of artistic expression
- recognize the need to have tools required to make art and recognize they need these "tools" to view art.

**Conceptual Map:**

*Grades 4–7*
Museum literacy
Introduction—5 minutes

Visual literacy
Elements discussion—20 minutes

Arts criticism
Criticism activity—15 minutes
Critics quotes—5 minutes

Art history and aesthetics
Art background—5 minutes
Aesthetics activity—15 minutes

Art making—15 minutes

Today the tour begins in some disorder. The schoolteacher and her group arrive unprepared for the initial self-directed portion of the program, which is sketching outdoors. As a result, they are confused by the timing and return late from the first segment. Joan and the other docent-educators on the tour wait anxiously in the foyer for them to re-enter, then, as they do return, hurriedly divide them into smaller groups and hustle them off to their respective starting points in the galleries. The late start throws off the planned "choreography" of the tour and other docent-educators take over the galleries designated for this group. Despite this, Joan stays with the conceptual map for the tour, improvising as necessary on the choice of galleries for selected activities.

Tour Account

This is one of three tours I observed with Joan. It is an interesting example of a stock school tour with well-behaved and informed students and a veteran gallery educator, but that is complicated by the exigencies of the situation. Because the time is severely truncated, Joan is forced to move away from the tour outline and call upon her own judgement.

Joan is in "the Loft", ripping up paper. She is wearing a white T-shirt, black vest with her name tag pinned on it, and black pants. The Loft is that part of the gallery reserved for
docents and gallery educators. It is a kind of workroom-cum-lunch area and the educational supplies are stored here as well. Part of Joan's school group has arrived, but they are outside sketching with their own teacher.

Finishing up, she goes downstairs to the foyer to wait for her group along with several other docent-educators. They talk amongst themselves about the gallery placements—where they will each be and when. All are pleased that there will be only eleven students in each group. A joke is made about VIP tours.

Joan's group comes in from sketching, but there is a problem. They have been divided into two groups and only half the group is here. The rest are still outside—somewhere.

The schoolteacher with the group approaches Joan and asks, "I wonder if you could make that self-guided portion of the program clear in the future? And maybe send out a copy of the sheet beforehand?"

"If you could write that down, it would be very helpful," Joan replies, pulling out a copy of the evaluation form and giving it to the schoolteacher. "I suggest that you complete this evaluation form before you leave today."

"I've been here before and I really like the tours. It just would help to know ahead of time. . . . I'm going out to look for the rest of the group," the schoolteacher says and bustles off outside.

Meanwhile the three docent-educators wait in the foyer for her to return with the rest of the group. The students are milling about, some are jumping, and a few are running around in circles. Joan asks them not to run.

Joan and the two other docent-educators talk about the time—they are ten minutes past starting time now and worry that they will lose their allotted gallery spaces.

"Okay!" Joan turns and says to the students, "Let's sit down and talk about this." She kneels on the floor and the students sit down in a semicircle facing her. "Who has been here before? . . . We're going to be talking about landscape today . . . " As she begins, the rest of the students join them. "Are you in groups? Maybe you could join your group now."

"Okay, into groups now!" calls out the schoolteacher.

The other two docents pick up their students and lead them to different spots in the foyer. But Joan remains seated on the floor with her students.

"We're going to have a very quick introduction because we're late starting," she tells them. "My name is Joan. . . . Who's been here before? . . . What did you see? . . . Today we're going to be looking at landscape but we'll try something a little different. . . . " Joan goes on to explain the history of the Country Art Gallery and what the students will be doing today. Several students have questions about the art-making activities in the afternoon, which she answers.

"Okay. All set?" she begins again. "We're going part way through the gallery because there are many groups today. What's the most important rule? . . . Why? . . . Get up and we'll
go into the gallery and get started!! Joan leads the students through galleries 1, 2, and 3 to begin in Gallery 4, as directed by her "choreography".

**GALLERY 4B**

This is a wide gallery, approximately twenty-five by fifty feet, divided in two by a partial wall. Joan goes to one side, stands in the centre of that space, and addresses the students.

"I want to point out the lights to you," she says, gesturing at them. "Please stay behind them. . . . What I would like you to do—staying in this space—is find something you like. Once you do that, note the artist's name." Joan remains behind as the students spread out around the room.

She asks the parent with the group, "You been here a million times, too?" The parent replies that no, she hasn't been, and she's keen on the program. "It's nice to have a small group. You can really do a lot with them," Joan continues. The parent talks a bit about the school the students are attending.

"Once you've found your piece, stand in front of it. . . . Let's start here." Joan sits down in front of a painting in the centre of the gallery. "A couple were in front of this one . . . . What did you like about this one? . . . Did anybody notice the name of the artist? . . . We'll talk more about the artist later . . . . Why did he do this? . . . Right, he wanted you to use your imagination."

As Joan is talking and listening to the students' answers, the schoolteacher appears in the gallery and stands at the back for a few moments, watching.

"Who chose one down here?" Joan continues. " . . . This one here? That's interesting because this one isn't chosen very often. Who is the artist? . . . What do you see here? . . . I'm too close here—I better move back . . . . Oh, interesting. Everybody mentioned that this looks windy. Why is that? . . . Are there some lines? . . . Let him finish . . . . Now, I want to sit down in front of this painting . . . . No one was really standing in front of this one."

"I was!" the parent says, laughing.

"Except for one," Joan smiles. "Why didn't you like this painting? . . . You've seen three different artists. I want to show you one more." Joan stands up and moves over beside another painting but the students remain seated. " . . . I don't want to discuss the painting but I want to show you a sketch and a painting. There are not too many up right now. I want you to see the differences. What do you see that is different between them? . . . Now, out of these four paintings—all landscapes—how many like [first], [second], [third], [fourth]? . . . Very interesting! That's the first time this painting has been chosen in the eight years that I've been at the gallery. You've taken the trouble to look! The story in a painting can be very important. Not many people see everything that you've seen. Let's go down there now . . . . I know some chose that."
Joan leads her group down to the other end of the gallery, stopping at three more paintings along the way. At each she asks who the painting is by, what the artist is trying to tell or do, and why the students liked it. At one she tells more about the artist's life.

There is a brief interruption as the Docent Coordinator enters and discusses with Joan a mix-up in gallery assignments. After she leaves, Joan turns back to the group and leads them to the other side of the gallery.

**GALLERY 4A**

Joan points out a small painting that was done in the vicinity of the school from which these students come, then stands to the right of the painting as the students gather around her.

"Okay—don't sit down—we're going to have an election. Which painting of these would you like to talk about? . . . " Joan kneels down in front of the painting chosen as the students sit in a semicircle around her. "We're going to be analyzing a work of art here. What do you SEE here? A thing—not colour, shape, lines . . . This is a painting by the artist we talked about earlier. Now, the first thing to look at is What is it? Number two is how the artist made it? . . . Third is, Why did the artist make it? What is he trying to say? . . ."

Several casual visitors enter the gallery. Some are looking at the same paintings as Joan and the students and walk amongst them to do so. You can hear docents in other, nearby galleries talking to their groups.

Joan glances at her watch, then takes out from her bag two small laminated cards with images on them. One is labelled "soft-edged"; the other is "hard-edged".

"What's the difference between these two cards?" Joan asks them. "The answer is on the card? Yes, but that's the cheating way!"

The schoolteacher returns and stands for a minute at the back. Joan continues talking about the painting then she asks the group to follow her back into Gallery 4B, about twenty feet away from the painting she has been discussing.

"What happens when you look at it from back here?" Joan asks and then walks back to stand by the painting. "What about here? . . . Move back a little. What happens now?"

The students talk about their reactions and then Joan leads them along through Gallery 5 and into Gallery 6.

**GALLERY 6A**

This is another large gallery divided in the middle by a wall. Joan leaves her group on this side of the wall, walks quickly around to the other side, and peeks in. Another docent-educator is working there with her group.

"We're supposed to be there," she says to the guide in the gallery. "Are they just started there?" Turning to the students, she tells them, "I'm going to show you three paintings that are just mountains. I want you to compare them and then we'll do something else . . ."
The schoolteacher is standing behind the group again when another woman enters the gallery and greets her with a hug.

"It's a superior tour this time," she says to the friend. "All three docents are drawing out the children! They're really looking at the paintings . . ."

"Which artist would you like to meet?" Joan asks the group. "What do you think this artist would have been like? . . . I've heard that he had quite a temper!"

Several docent-educators lead their groups back and forth through the gallery as Joan stands talking with the students. Another docent leads her group into the gallery.

"Where are you supposed to be?" Joan asks her.

"We're going upstairs," she replies.

"Good—we're supposed to be in there," Joan sighs. "Okay, let's find a space!" she calls to the group then notices several students giggling with one another in the corner. "They just want you to look at the nude over there," she says to the rest of the group. "Take a look and then we'll try to move into this space."

"I don't know why they're getting so silly about that nude. We have one in the classroom," says the schoolteacher.

GALLERY 5

This is a long, narrow gallery with artworks on both walls that is used as a thoroughfare to get from one gallery to the next. Joan stands about halfway up the gallery as the students assemble around her. Several groups pass through the gallery. The narrowness requires them to move around one another.

"I just want to give you the activity. Get into groups of four . . . Think about going to a movie. The first scene or picture in a movie tells you something. What kind of movie do you like? . . . Okay—stay in this space. Think about a movie you want to see. Find something that suits you. You find horror. You find fantasy-drama. Look at the colour and the lines."

The students go off in groups to look at paintings around the gallery. There is another docent-led group at the other end of the gallery—older teenagers or adults—and the two groups intermingle with one another.

"This is really confused because we started so late," Joan explains. "I'm not supposed to be here now. I should have been in the other half of Gallery 6. We could have stayed where we were, it looks like now, but I wasn't sure if anyone was coming in there . . ."

Joan walks amongst the students as they talk in small groups in front of different paintings. The guide approaches Joan and asks her to remind students about staying back behind the lights.

"Girls—all ready? Guys?" she calls to them. "Who wants to go first? . . . Let's sit down here—close in—so that the other groups can walk by. Okay. Listen to the group presenting and then they'll listen to you. This group?"
As Joan listens, each group presents. Then she asks them questions about why they chose the painting, what gives them that feeling, what is in painting, the name of artist, and so on. As the students present, they cut one another off in their excitement. Joan asks them to be quiet and look. For the last group, Joan leads the students over to painting and they stand and look at it together.

"Normally we would sketch now, but we don't have time. I'd like you to find part of a painting—like a house or a tree—that interests you. For example, this house here . . . and then change the landscape around it. We'll finish at twelve, then there'll be forty-five minutes for lunch and one hour to do the work. Look around here for a couple of minutes and find the painting you want to work with. . . . Right away! Know exactly where you are coming back to after lunch."

After a few minutes, Joan asks them to follow her back to the foyer where she arranges with the schoolteacher where they will meet after lunch. On her way back to the Loft, Joan talks to one of the other docent-educators leading this school group and checks to see where she will be starting with her group in the afternoon. Finally, she goes up to eat her own lunch.

**Pedagogical Reasoning Behind Joan's Tour**

Once more using Shulman's model, as Joan understands it, the purpose of her work at the Country Art Gallery is to enable learners to interpret art on their own. As she says, "I don't want to be doing the interpreting . . . I'm not interpreting it TO them, I'm interpreting it for me. And I want to see them interpret it for THEM." (Int-AGJ2, 438–43) This is because, as Joan says, "going to an art gallery should be able to enrich your life" (Int-AGJ1, 1014–24).

On the whole, Joan is comfortable with the preparation of the Looking at Landscape tour as it has already been done by the Education Coordinator. As we see on the tour outline presented in the tour synopsis above, he has already interpreted and analyzed the "texts", which in this case include the public school curriculum, discipline-based arts education, both landscape art in general, and, specifically, as it has been interpreted by the curators in the exhibits themselves. Using this material, he has structured and segmented the material to create the conceptual map. Because the map so closely follows the guidelines
of discipline-based arts education (Getty Center 1985) it suggests that he has also clarified that the key purpose of the tour is arts education. Consistent with this approach, Joan has focused her thinking on elements of design and art vocabulary and the process by which the artists use these to express ideas and impressions. As she says,

... that they can look at a painting and they can see that there are brush strokes, that an artist has physically made this. Even if they can’t see—I guess what I’d LOVE to be able to do is be able to think in terms of shapes and lines and colours, so that even if they see an abstract painting it’s not totally overwhelming. “Well, what is it?” “Well, it’s shapes, it’s colour, it’s a painting!” ... And it’s the process that makes it. That it’s made by [somebody] that becomes important, but they don’t have to know that... as long as they can look at it and say, “What is it?”... (Int-AGJ2, 1805–20)

Joan consciously chooses to follow the conceptual map she has been given:

That’s how I was taught. Some people veer off that but I find everything works better if I don’t. There’s a lot of flexibility within that structure, so I don’t mind staying with it. I’m not a particularly structured person but I find I work better when there’s SOME structure. And that’s been done like that for a reason and I’m happy to work with that. It does work well. (Int-AGJ2, 1730–50)

Joan’s primary concern for her own transformation of the tour is the aspect of representation. Although the conceptual map sets forth the types of activities and modes of teaching to be used on the tour, Joan must adapt her choices to the galleries and works of art she will use on the tour. When she arrived at work, her choreography was posted on the bulletin board in the Loft. The choreography, which is assigned by the Education Coordinator, denotes the order in which each docent or educator has access to one, or part of one, of the thirteen gallery spaces. Joan then decided what that meant in terms of the ‘conceptual map’ of the tour. She was concerned about the artworks available to her in the galleries and how busy with casual visitors these galleries might be at this time of day.

Today she is pleased with the order of galleries assigned to her, beginning in Gallery 4. Because the permanent exhibition galleries are arranged in a linear, chronological sequence, she finds it very difficult to develop a theme if she has to begin in Gallery 6 and work backward against the timeline (Int-AGJ2, 1424–82). Interestingly, however, Joan is not concerned about choosing individual art works to discuss on this tour. Instead, she
feels the focus is on the process of looking at art and indentifying the works that might interest the students:

You can talk about any painting the same way. It’s a process rather than the individual work and so it really doesn’t matter. . . . Now, over time, you learn which ones interest the KIDS more. So I can almost tell you in each gallery where people will stop—most of them . . . what you learn is that you really can talk about any painting in the gallery. It’s not a big deal. (Int-AGJ2, 1677–79)

In terms of selection from her instructional repertoire, Joan has discussed with her partner educators on this tour the activities they would each do, where, and when. Again she sticks to the choices offered on the conceptual map, reinforced by the gallery’s dictate that urges docent-educators to “make sure that all groups from the same class do the same activity.”

She has done little thinking beforehand about adaptation of the tour to the characteristics of the student group. This is because she is frequently “flipped” over to a different tour at the last minute. Furthermore, she sees preparation of the students as the role of the schoolteacher. It is possible for her to really teach in the Gallery when she can build upon work done in the classroom, prior to the tour.

A teacher who’s really worked, that’s what they want to see. I think they really want the kids to be able to say what they know, that’s why they taught them something about the art. Then it becomes really positive reinforcement for both the students—because they feel good ‘cause they know something—but it’s positive for the teacher, too. See, this works! These guys actually know something. (Int-AGJ2, 2073–81)

However, once settled with a group, she does try to tailor the tour to their needs and interests. We see this happening in the foyer when Joan sits down to talk with her group as they are assembling. That most of the students have been to the gallery before is new information for her. In response, she decides privately that she will “recognize their experiences” by showing some of the less well-known paintings (Int-AGJ2, 1635–54). But she feels restricted in the development of any relationship with the students because of the short-term nature of the tour. She cannot really be herself on a school tour:

I think I act. [pause] I truly think it’s a performance in a way. Because you don’t—it’s not like teaching in that you have a long-term relationship; you
have a very short-term relationship. So you have to put yourself forward
IMMEDIATELY, not halfway through the tour, it has to be within the first
few minutes . . . . Now you’re reacting to people, it’s not like you’re
scripted. I don’t mean like a stage performance but a personality
performance. (Int-AGJ2, 122–71)

Joan is also concerned with adaptation and tailoring to the schoolteacher’s
characteristics. It is important to her that a good relationship be established with the
schoolteacher (Int-AGJ2, 1532–46), because she believes that school classes with advance
preparation come away with not only more knowledge about the art and artists but also a
way to look at the artwork independently. They are not overwhelmed:

And I find, again, the more preparation they’ve done the more they DON’T
clump. When it’s their first exposure—WOW!—they go to the big ones!
[laughs] It’s just like an adult; adults do the same and they notice the biggest
thing. They’re overwhelmed by the amount of stuff. (Int-AGJ2, 1793–
1800)

However, bookings are the responsibility of another person in the department, so on this
tour her first contact with the schoolteacher is over a problem encountered with the
gallery’s advance information. At this point she has to improvise in order to placate her.

She relies on her past experience with other teachers in order to do that:

Oh, EVERY situation is different! There is no way—some of them come in
like a sergeant-major and you think, “Oh, my God, will I ever make it?” and
then they can be wonderful. Somebody else comes in and they’re flustered
and they can’t find anything and they don’t know what to do and you think,
“How does she get through the day?” Somebody else’ll talk; teachers will
talk throughout the whole thing, some of them being helpful and others just
being painful! And you can’t always tell right at the beginning. We’re
supposed to go up and talk to them . . . to make sure and always TRY to
say . . . “Is there anything we should know about in particular? . . .
[T]here’s just NO common denominator other than that you want to
communicate with them. (Int-AGJ2, 1555–92)

As a result of the misunderstanding much time is lost and Joan has little opportunity to talk
with the schoolteacher about the in–gallery tour and to tailor it for her needs. In Gallery 6A
we see the schoolteacher expressing her satisfaction to another staff member, but Joan is
unaware of this as she is conducting the tour.

Joan’s active instruction follows the conceptual map relatively closely. Her comfort
with the flexible and interactive techniques suggests that she comprehends the subject
matter to be taught and the pedagogical reasoning that has gone into the design of the tour (Shulman 1987, 18). Because of this she is able to adjust her tour to the demands of limited time and space, which are especially pressing on this tour. For example, in terms of time, she decides that they will do their sketch after lunch rather than before, but asks them to choose a piece now. Regarding space issues, we see Joan in Gallery 6A unable to access her assigned gallery and therefore having to improvise regarding her choice of artworks and activities:

I had something planned in my mind for the NEXT space . . . and now I can't get there. And I don't know whether the person over there is just going to move and I'm going to have to move. Whereas if I know I'm in a certain space, I know that's mine and even if somebody comes in, darn it all, I'm supposed to be there! . . . in this space that's when you're supposed to do an activity, so I don't know whether to hand out cards or start them doing an activity, because then if somebody else comes in then you can't. . . . I need the time and I need the space. The space is less important 'cause I can cram it into a smaller space, but I still need enough time to have them find something and for me to take up the response . . . It doesn't sound serious, but it is. (Int-AGJ2, 2085–126)

Joan continually evaluates the progress of her tour. She observes students during the tour and checks for student understanding based on the choices they make, responses to questions, and interaction with the gallery spaces. For example, in Gallery 4B she is encouraged by the students’ use of space and choice of painting:

It really was interesting because that painting is not discussed. . . . they pointed out to me things that I'd never even noticed in that painting. I don't think I've ever really used that painting. . . . I'm always interested when they choose something that's other than the usual ones. . . . I like to see when a class spreads out more. I find oftentimes, not always, but oftentimes they are a little more interested? But that may be because many of them had been there before, so now they were more interested in looking around at some other things. (Int-AGJ2, 1765–1800)

However, she sees this as more an evaluation of the schoolteacher’s work than of her own—"the more preparation they've done they more they DON'T clump" (Int-AGJ2, 1765–1800). Nevertheless, in Gallery 4B Joan adjusts her teaching according to her evaluation and encourages the group to move into analysis of the artwork that is a little beyond the regular tour. She feels that this group has demonstrated that they “know something” (Int-AGJ2, 1921–37).
Following the tour, Joan reflects on her work by reviewing, reconstructing, and critically analyzing her own as well as the class’s performance:

They are a nice group. There was a bit of chaos in the gallery, though. I would have liked to have done a game there. I was supposed to be on the other side and I didn’t want to take someone else’s space. But they were a good group—enthusiastic, chatty, a bit active—you could see that when they were waiting in the lobby. . . . What’s important is the enthusiasm—and the enthusiasm of the teacher. She had been here before. I chose to have them look at several works on that first stop because so many of the students had been here before. I didn’t want to duplicate a painting that they might have already studied in depth so I had THEM choose. But I really don’t think the other way would have been a problem. There wasn’t really a sense of them having done all this before . . . . (FN-AGJ3, 402–14)

Joan finds that she has a broader experience upon which to reflect since she became a gallery educator. Not only is she more frequently at the gallery and therefore more familiar with what is going on (Int-AGJ1, 341–44), but she also does many more tours:

I do SO many tours now and they come boom, boom, boom, boom, boom. And in some ways that’s really good, because you’re so practised up and it gives you a chance to try different—to try things that work. You think, “Whoa! I hit on that and that really worked, so I’ll try this again!” Whereas as a docent, you maybe did one tour and then you weren’t scheduled for that tour again for several weeks. And so by then you’d sort of forgotten the circumstance. (Int-AGJ2, 53–62)

Through this, she is able to encompass the responses of many more student groups and schoolteachers when she thinks about her teaching.

Because [slight pause] I can see what I’m doing? And [slight pause] maybe in some ways it makes you a little more analytical. Because if they’re not paying attention, it’s not so much that they don’t like me personally, it’s that they don’t like something that I’m doing or that they may just not want to be there in general. But that’s okay, there are ways to help deal with that as well. So you can look at it and say, “Well, that wasn’t very successful, was it?” But it’s not, “Gee, I’m a failure at this”—what I WAS doing. . . . I think you just have to distance yourself a little bit from it . . . . (Int-AGJ2, 173–89)

Coupled with her continued reflective practice, this breadth of experience allows her to step back from and look more critically at her work.
While her pedagogical reasoning still follows Shulman’s cycle of reasoning, Joan chooses to emphasize certain aspects of the tour over others. I argue that this is because she subscribes to a certain aesthetic of the tour that is determined by the qualities to which she chooses to attend. Her perception of these qualities in turns modulates her experience of the tour (Eisner 1985, 63). Joan perceives the tour rightly enough to be a school tour and, as such, a continuation of and interaction with the classroom experience. We see this in her concern for the schoolteacher’s advance preparation of the students and her hope that the tour will reinforce classroom teaching and learning for both teacher and students. To do this she has internalized the tour outline offered by the gallery, with its clearly identified goals and learning outcomes.

In the process, however, she does not assert her second purpose, which is that the gallery visit will enrich the students’ private lives. When she asks students if they have visited the gallery before, she implies “on a school tour.” In later conversations with me about the tour rarely does she draw upon her own extensive history as a museum and gallery visitor to explain her pedagogical reasoning. For example, Joan takes tours not to explore the art experience but to “hear stories” beyond the label text (Int-AGJ1, 683–840) but her training as a docent/gallery educator discourages her from doing this with school tours. Thus her experience as a museum user is not passed along to the students. Instead, it is overridden by the knowledge valued in the school curriculum. The aesthetic becomes that of a school tour rather than a museum tour.
Bern's Tour

SYNOPSIS

The characters in this tour account are Bern, a teacher-participant in the study; from fifteen to twenty adult visitors; and Ruth, a member of the Gallery’s education staff.

The setting is the foyer of the Country Art Gallery. It is mid-afternoon on an overcast Sunday in early April. To one side of the foyer a musical performance is taking place in which a singer performs in front of a seated audience of about one hundred. Casual visitors come and go from the galleries but it is not an inordinately busy day. There has been an announcement on the public address system about the scheduled tour and a group of fifteen adults has already gathered by the gift shop, as instructed. They are predominantly middle-aged to older couples casually dressed in jeans, shirts, running shoes, and light jackets. Bern stands amongst them with his back to the gallery doors.

This is a tour of a temporary special exhibit, a retrospective exploring the work of one artist. The outline has been developed by the Education Officer and is designed to accommodate the needs of any casual visitors who may choose to take the tour, but it is primarily for adults. The following goals and outline are excerpted from a seven-page document that describes the key subject-matter points of the tour in a narrative format. The Tour Outline section is prefaced with the statement, “This outline provides suggestions as to tour content. Before the tour begins, the Docent/Educator will determine the interests of the group. Throughout the tour he/she will attempt to establish an interactive approach.”

Special Exhibit Tour

Goals

- Introduce the artist, his art and life.
- Encourage a friendly, meaningful interaction between the visitors and this man’s art.
• Facilitate an exploration of subject matter and the themes of landscape, still life, and figure.
• Help visitors feel comfortable and encourage them to make return visits.

Tour Outline

Introduction
Youth
Cityscapes
The Thirties
Introduction to subject matter
The Figure
The Landscape
The Still life & the interior
Interiors
Self-portraits
The Artist’s family

As the tour unfolds today, Bern gathers his group together in the foyer of the
Country Art Gallery and leads them up to the second floor in order to view the special
exhibit. It is only the second or third time he has done this tour and he does not yet feel it
has “gelled.” Furthermore, he has been asked to do what is normally a forty-five-minute to
an hour-long tour in thirty minutes in order to allow visitors an opportunity to participate in
another of the gallery’s programs. Accordingly, Bern conducts the group through the
special exhibit more quickly than he would like. He begins with a group of fifteen adults
but more people join him as he moves through the three galleries. He concludes the tour
with almost twenty-five people in attendance.

Tour Account

This is one of three tours I followed with Bern. It is the only tour/program in this study that
is presented exclusively for casual visitors. As such, it represents some of the opportunities
and challenges that are perhaps uniquely faced by the docent who leads an ad hoc group
through a public gallery on the weekend. However, like Joan’s tour, it also shows Bern’s
priorities when faced with lack of time to do everything.
Bern stands amongst the gathered adults with his back to the doors into the galleries. He is dressed casually in a sage-green sweater with grey pants.

"Okay, ladies and gentlemen, it's 2:30," Bern says. "We'll start now. I thought I would be talking to myself! Follow me, please."

Bern leads the group up the ramp from the foyer to the second floor, stopping in front of the lounge area.

**FOUNDERS’ LOUNGE**

"Welcome to the Country Art Gallery!" he calls out to the group. "Usually my tours are three hours long, but today will be a little shorter so that you may join a re-enactment of the life of the artist's father, taking place in there. If you have any questions pertaining to the paintings, please fire them at me! If I know, I'll tell you. If not, I don't make up anything!"

He leads them along the corridor to the first gallery they will visit.

**GALLERY 12: SPECIAL EXHIBITON**

Gallery 12 is a long gallery—about fifty feet long by twenty-five feet wide. It is divided in two by two wide columns. The group enters through the doors at one end of the gallery.

Bern leads the group to the far side of the gallery, on the other side of the columns. He stands in the middle of the gallery with the group facing him in a loose semicircle. He begins with a brief personal history of the artist. Then he points to the painting on his left and explains the style used.

"You'll see one hundred and seventeen of his works today," he explains. "In his lifetime he painted three thousand!"

Bern describes several paintings within view, with the group shifting on the spot to look at the works. Then he leads them to the other side of the column by the introductory label and talks briefly there.

"Come, I have so much to show you!" he says delightedly as he leads the group on to the next painting. Bern stands by each painting—usually to the right—often telling a story related to the painting.

Visitors come and go from the tour, some linger in the last gallery and then catch up, while some just leave the tour. Other visitors join the tour part way through. By this point there are about twenty people following him. They follow Bern as he walks through the gallery, stopping to talk beside several pieces. He leads them into the next gallery.

**GALLERY 11: SPECIAL EXHIBITION**

This is a broader gallery than the last—perhaps forty by thirty feet—but it is divided into two spaces by a partial wall.
Bern stops for a moment in front of several paintings depicting nude boys and notes that the boys were related to the artist. Then he stands in the centre of the gallery as the group forms a loose semicircle around him.

"Oh, yes, he was a commissioned war artist," he says, with reference to another of the paintings. "A dismal failure. 'What is there for me to paint?' he said. 'Just little aeroplanes.' Okay, let's look at his still lives. Time is, unfortunately, not my own today."

Bern leads his group into the second small gallery space where he points out a still life and a couple of landscapes.

"Here is a man who likes to be alone," Bern stops beside another painting and notes. "This looks to me like a child's illustrated storybook. He was a very unique man—shown in the National Gallery during his lifetime. Moving a little faster—one I really like—and I didn't at first, but I have grown into it. Would I buy it? Not at first glance," he says, walking on. "There's not much time and I still want to show you two more galleries!" Pointing at another painting he says, "Here's another one that I really like."

"Why do you really like that?" an adult with the group queries.

Bern responds that it is the style—a very smooth effect. He leads the group back into the larger side of the gallery space and points out another painting.

"This is his wife. By this time there was big trouble!" Bern says with a smile. The group laughs with him at the figure of a rather dour-looking woman.

"I've been talking so much!" he says, pointing across the gallery to another painting.

"Now, the model that most people in Montreal wanted. Her name was Pamela. The reason that she was in such demand? She could hold a pose for a long time. . . ." He talks a bit more about her work.

Over the public address system there is an announcement for the next program.

"Another favourite over here," Bern leads them on. "An inner landscape."

There are about twenty-five people now following Bern as he continues to point out several more paintings in the gallery. He tends to point out a painting, walk toward it, and then speak briefly about it, perhaps offering an anecdote or a question on style.

"One more gallery I want to draw you to," he announces. "See the man now!"

**GALLERY 10—SPECIAL EXHIBITION**

Bern leads the group to a self-portrait of the artist and tells a story about him. Then he points out the easel—the same one stands today in the corner of the gallery—and tells a story about the artist's second wife coming to visit the gallery. He points out several more paintings in this gallery.

One painting relates to something he said earlier and he recalls for the group, "I used the term 'diagrammatic scribble' and here it is. . . . Now, after a long illness, the artist died at
seventy-three. . . I hope you've had a good afternoon!" He nods as the group applauds him.

"Follow me back if you want to see the presentation and lecture on the artist's family."

Ruth, a staff person at the Country Art Gallery, steps forward and announces the presentation again.

Bern stays for a moment to say to me that he likes to tell the story of the artist. After line, colour, shape, and texture, he believes people want to know who the artist is.

"You'll have to excuse me," says a woman from the tour, who has been standing close by looking at a painting. "I've been eavesdropping! I agree with that. I want to know more about the artist. I can see the art on my own, but I'm interested in knowing more about the man behind the paintings."

Bern talks to her a bit more about the artist and his work. Then he excuses himself to conduct the next tour.

**PEDAGOGICAL REASONING BEHIND BERN'S TOUR**

Bern understands the purpose of the tour to be "leading people to understanding" (Int-AGB2, 404–5). His aim is to "spark an idea for the visitor to latch on to and hopefully [it] will be the nucleus on which to build" (Bern's response to Int-AGB1, 56–57). His goal for this tour is to connect the visitor with the "human figure (a creator) behind the painting" (FN-AGB1, 235 text insert):

> It is of paramount importance to portray the creator of that art piece as a real person—not a phantom existing in the minds of people. A real person with emotions, outlooks, likes and dislikes etc. (Let the artist step out of the picture and show his face). (Int-AGB1, 178 text insert)

Bern conceptualizes the tour outline as the skeleton of his tour which he must then transform to his own liking (Int-AGB2, 939–72). His preparation primarily involves reading about the artist and his work:

> . . . I've read everything that I could lay hands on—on the artist, here and other galleries. And I'm quite aware, first of all, that people know very little about him. He was only a painter that was discovered really in the eighties, when he was given NEW recognition. . . . So it will mean a little more clear in your explanation to try and give this man the position that he holds in the painting world that he does. . . . So there's a lot of preparation. (Int-AGB2, 812–57)
Using his reading and other research, he goes on to consider the paintings that will best represent certain aspects of the tour. For example, he has chosen the painting in Gallery 12 because he

... can IMMEDIATELY tell them something about the artist that will fill them with notes... There's a painting where you've got the human figure, you've got the landscape, and the still life—these three elements, all three encapsulated, all three is right there in front and they can see when I say... "he gives equal attention to these three elements"... It's a GOOD starting point! (Int-AGB2, 1154–70)

Similarly, he chooses to discuss a large number of paintings on this tour—one hundred and seventeen, as he notes in Gallery 12—because he wants "to give [the tour group] impressions and NOT the details" (Int-AGB2, 1198). The activity of representation and his choice of paintings then acts upon the way in which he will structure and segment the tour. The physical placement of the works he chooses determines, at least in part, the order in which they will be addressed in the development of his theme.

Working as the sole docent on the tour, Bern does not have a pre-assigned choreography. He may choose the order of his own galleries. Interestingly enough, he begins his tour in the final gallery and works his way back to the beginning, because he feels this offers more of a sense of the dramatic, as we see demonstrated in Gallery 10:

That is definitely very conscious and one of the things that I started immediately when I started doing the special exhibit tour. It is very well put together, you know, in terms of the gallery. "The man, we don't see him right till the end, we see him right in the last gallery. That is where this man lives and we see him right here. I've talked a lot about him but now let's meet this guy, let's put a face to this fellow. And also a sense of how he sees himself." (Int-AGB2, 1343–61)

The issue of selection in terms of his instructional repertoire does not arise at this point in his thinking. It appears that a lecture-discussion mode is assumed by most docent-educators on weekend tours. The tour outline limits direction to tour content, suggesting only that the docent-educator determine the interests of the group before the tour begins and that "throughout the tour he/she will attempt to establish an interactive approach."

Moreover, Bern needs to determine the mode by which he will attract people to his tour, something with which docent-educators on booked tours do not have to concern
themselves. In this case, he chooses to begin the tour in the foyer rather than wait and gather people outside the special exhibit, as such tours would do normally. Bern finds the gathering of people to be an awkward step that is eased by having a number of people already with him.

So I alert people, too. Because, first of all, it will also help me to attain my comfort level. When I get there, there WILL be people I’m talking to. But then, at the commencement of the tour, about 2:30, when I have my initial two people, then I slightly raise my voice and say “Well, we’re about to start . . .” and others will come. I didn’t go and especially ask them to come, but then they say, “Oh! There’s a tour on. Let’s go.” (Int-AGB2, 1031–55)

Bern spends considerable time thinking about adapting his tour to what he perceives will be the characteristics of his tour group. Because this is an ad hoc group that comes together at the moment of the tour, he has the advantage of neither a confirmation sheet with even sketchy information on the group’s needs and interests nor a schoolteacher or group leader with whom to compare notes. Instead he tries to determine what information on the artist’s life and work will be of interest to his audience. He begins by classifying this potential audience into three groups: “those who love this artist, those who hate this artist, and . . . those who don’t UNDERSTAND this artist” (FN-AGB1, 235 text insert). Then he considers, in terms of his information, “What is there that I can still tell the people to make them a little more interested?” (Int-AGB2, 768–808).

Once involved in active instruction, Bern leads his group through the galleries. He is very conscious of the observable acts of teaching. For example, Bern’s introduction to the group outside the Founders’ Lounge is based on an assumption that this group will have prior knowledge of and experience with the Country Art Gallery because they have chosen this tour. He cuts out altogether a general gallery introduction. As he explains:

I think that they have a little knowledge of the gallery because they came here to see that. . . . They didn’t come to the gallery to see ALL the paintings. They came to see the special exhibit. So that means they’ve got some knowledge of it and they have some special interest that they want me to [pursue] and, hopefully, that I’ll utilize every minute of the time that they’ve given me for that. (Int-AGB2, 1115–45)
As well, he strives to ensure that there is a “starting point to explore from” by first pointing out what is striking or relevant about a painting and then allowing the visitors to “check it out for themselves.” “That to me,” he argues, “is good pedagogy—even the most ill-informed person in the group will at least have some basis . . .” (FN-AGB3, 185 text insert). Even as he is touring, he is looking for the best position for group viewing of an artwork as well as the paintings that best illustrate the theme of his tour: “Your choice of painting for the particular tour may not be the way the curator had the paintings hung in the gallery . . . The choice of paintings and the time are entirely mine.” (FN-AGB1, 170 text insert). We see this in Gallery 12 as he carefully positions himself beside a certain painting: “Okay, now I started on the other side of the wall—the label is on THIS side—for the specific purpose of getting to that painting” (Int-AGB2, 1154–70).

Bern evaluates his tour in different ways. In terms of checking for learner understanding, he regrets that he has had to forego verbal audience feedback on this tour in order to have time to share the basic information. However, he is cognizant of non verbal feedback from the group that he defines as the “testing/checking out situation” of casual visitors to the gallery. Unless he moves quickly and shows the group a number of artworks, he feels that with “a really controversial figure like the artist it is very easy to lose your people, VERY easy” (Int-AGB2, 1216–23). If they are interested, then, “Timing is nothing. They will stay with me . . .” (Int-AGB1, 230–40). That more people join the tour in Gallery 10 encourages him. However, he is simultaneously evaluating his own performance in terms of what he understands the gallery’s expectations to be. Throughout the tour, we see him grappling with lack of time. He sees it as an issue of judgement on the gallery’s part:

And that girl who came in after me said can I cut it down to thirty minutes so that people can go and listen to that play—to that speaker. . . . I come here to do a tour. I don’t come here to be pushed into a corner and say, “You must do it. We have something else.” That means my tour is not important. And I think I already fill needs in there. Also, a couple of little things that I shared with my group are very important. Then someone comes to tell me now, “Will you rush—will you cut it down now?” That threw me, I think. I would even go to the point of saying it is unprincipled
to do that... Basically those people didn’t even know about me—didn’t even know about the tour. (Int-AGB2, 1280–99)

Finally, he reflects upon his own performance, recalling with a laugh that he did forget one thing about the artist.

And I think a lot about being a docent. Anything new that I can bring in. And also very conscious that I could forget something... that will be important, that will enhance the understanding. And I DID forget one thing. I was thinking, mulling in my mind all day long. And that is, in the discussion of the landscape, I forgot to tell them that... At the end I forgot the very important thing that he didn’t glamorize or romanticize the thing. He was only trying to get you down into the inner consciousness... On subsequent tours I did it... So, it was a BEAUTIFUL thing to draw together, and I forgot! And I went home and I said, "Grrr." (Int-AGB2, 812–57)

**SUMMARY**

This tour exhibits some of the traits that may be unique to a casual visitor tour of the galleries. First, Bern is competing for the visitors’ time and attention. He must not only attract visitors to his tour but also maintain their interest. Even when he is successful in doing this, he must cope with and accommodate the gallery’s own competing demands on the visitors’ time; for example, on this afternoon the gallery is presenting a re-enactment in the Founders’ Lounge.

Second, despite his best intentions, the group numbers fluctuate. People come and go according to their own needs and interests throughout the half-hour program. There is not only a different audience for each tour, but a changing audience within the tour itself. Shulman’s model assumes a captive audience of students that allows for a complete cycle of pedagogical reasoning, yet here we see something more akin to the recreational nature of interpretation discussed in Chapter Two. Bern’s tour assumes more the dimension of a performance than of a lesson, a point I would like to pursue further in the case analysis at the conclusion of this chapter.

The third point to which I would like to draw attention is Bern’s focus on the works of art as the critical element in his transformation of the tour outline into teaching. Not only
does he focus on researching the artworks, but the structure of his tour is primarily
determined by the choice of works. This is in contrast to Joan and Walt, who focus their
transformation of the text on the process of interpretation and on the audience’s response to
it.

Walt’s Tour

SYNOPSIS

The characters in this tour account are Walt, a teacher-participant; a group of ten women
who are participating in a program for spouses of conference delegates (of which the
gallery tour is but one component); and the tour guide conducting the overall conference
program.

The setting is the Country Art Gallery on a weekday morning in late spring. A
number of folding tables have been set up in the foyer to accommodate hands-on programs
for the school groups who will be arriving shortly. Walt will be the sole docent on this
tour, but he stands in the foyer with a small group of gallery educators and other docents
who are also waiting for their groups to arrive. There is ongoing banter amongst them that
Walt later compares to a scene in the movie Bull Durham, when the baseball team gathers at
the pitcher’s mound in the midst of the game to talk about small events in their lives (FN-
AGW2, 8 text insert).

Today he will be conducting a general tour. Unlike school and special exhibit tours,
docents are encouraged to develop their own general tour for casual visitors. The tour
outline for this public program, while noting theme, goals, and expected learning
outcomes, provides a conceptual map based on the parts of the tour (introduction, body,
and conclusion) rather than the constructs outlined in Joan’s tour. As an introduction to the
site, the tour is considered by the Education Coordinator to be “gallery driven” rather than
based on a specified theme. Docents are encouraged to work with the Docent Coordinator
and Education Officer to “weave their own story” around the theme and connections that they find relevant.

**General Tour**

**Goals**

- To introduce the visitor to the museum, its collection, and its programs.
- To provide tools for looking at art that can be useful in other museums or for further visits.

**Conceptual Map**

- Introduction—5–10 minutes
- In the gallery space—45–50 minutes (rule of thumb: cover a minimum of five galleries)
- Conclusion—5 minutes

Walt meets his group in the foyer. He knows already that they are here with a Tour Guide as part of a day-long itinerary offered for spouses of delegates to a conference in the nearby city. He chats with the group for a few moments before leading them on a linear path through the galleries. The pattern that emerges is Walt stopping at the entrance to each gallery, providing a short introduction, allowing the group to look at the artworks on their own, and then following up in small groups with brief discussions about individual works.

**Tour Account**

This is one of four tours I followed with Walt. The other three were school tours and followed much the same format as Joan’s tour, albeit presented in Walt’s own style. However, this tour allowed me to study a pre-booked general tour for adults that was unavailable at the other sites.

Walt comes up the stairs from the lower level into the foyer. He is wearing green slacks and a polo shirt on which his security pass is pinned. As he waits in the foyer, a group of women arrive together. One woman approaches Walt and introduces herself to him.

Walt asks her how many people are in the group and where they are from. As he talks to the first woman, the rest of the group gather around him. They are generally middle-aged and casually well-dressed, and relate that they are visiting Toronto from different parts of the
world. All are English-speaking. In response to information that one woman is from Denmark, Walt responds that his father emigrated to Canada from that country.

"How are you?" Walt asks the group. "You've got about ten people? Are your husbands here on business then? . . ." They talk with him as the tour guide who escorted the group here hands out Art Gallery buttons to everyone.

"Now," Walt begins, "it's good to see you! . . . Do you know anything about [the nearby city]? . . ." Walt stands in the centre of the small group as he talks with them.

"What a wicked man!" the tour guide responds laughingly to one comment.

"Not so far!" says Walt. "Come this way," he adds, leading them across the foyer.

*I'm a retired educator, but I still work here and on a farm . . . at a golf course . . . some consulting . . . . . . Being retired—there's no other way to fly! Come on!*

IN THE FOYER

Walt stops to the left of a large photomural on the wall just outside the entrance to the galleries, by the gift shop. The group gathers in a loose semicircle facing him. He tells them about the history of the Country Art Gallery and its founders, then turns and leads them into the first gallery.

GALLERY 1

This is a long, narrow gallery—perhaps fifty feet long by fifteen feet wide—divided by low walls into smaller pods. Walt stops in the first pod area, beside the first two paintings collected by the founders. The group gathers in a couple of rows facing him. He talks about the art and artists they will be seeing today.

Walt stops for a minute and looks down the gallery. There are two other groups in the room—one stopped about midway, the other seated on the floor at the far end. Leading his group about halfway down the gallery, Walt stops and talks in a low voice about the art in this gallery. Then he leads them down to a stone at the very end of the gallery. Tracing his finger along it, he tells them how it was used.

"This is the only exhibit in the Art Gallery that you can actually touch." he says. "Art asks to be touched—but this is the only one that you actually can."

GALLERY 2

As the group follows Walt into the next gallery, the guide is standing looking out of the large floor-to-ceiling window. She points out a beautiful blue bird flitting about in the rocks outside the window.

"Forget art! Come and look at this!" Walt calls to the group. They gather around the window and talk with the guide and Walt about the native bird.
He turns to the group and asks them to look around on their own for a bit. They fan out around this gallery—mostly on their own, but a few talk in small groups.

Walt stops and talks to one small group about the work they are considering. "Looks like a small travel photograph, doesn't it?" he asks them. They talk for a moment about the art and skiing. Then he asks the whole group to follow him into the next gallery.

**GALLERY 3**

Walt stops just inside the gallery, a bigger space of about twenty-five by forty feet, and the group forms around him. He introduces the different artists displayed in the gallery and then asks the women to look about on their own. A couple stay to ask him questions while others stand in small groups talking amongst themselves.

"Do they have cards of these pictures in the gift shop?" a group member asks him. He calls to the group to join him at the other end, but they continue to look on their own.

"They won't listen!" the tour guide teases him.

"Course not," Walt says with a laugh, "they're interested in looking at the art on their own. You have to be adaptable."

Walt stands beside a small painting while the group slowly gathers. He talks about the painting and the story of how the artist originally rejected it, painted an X through it and threw it away, but it was retrieved by another painter. He goes on to say that he tells schoolchildren that it is a good example of not always being aware of your own talents.

"That's nice. Where's the X?" a group member asks, as she moves closer to the work.

"Keep behind the lights," Walt chides her good-naturedly, "you're getting a bit close. It's a form of retroactive birth control . . . Come over here now," he continues, " . . . I want to show you the sketch for that painting. When I work with the schoolchildren, I point it out and compare the two. Can you see some of the differences between them?"

They talk about what they see for a moment and then Walt leads them into the next gallery. One of the group members lingers behind.

**GALLERY 4**

This is another long gallery, divided into two spaces by a wall. Walt waits for the group to gather around him by the entrance. He talks for a minute about one painting and then asks the group to look around on their own. There is a school class on the other side of the gallery.

"Some changes," Walt says to the group. "I like to have a bit of fun. This is new! Every time I look around I see new paintings. The curators change them almost weekly. The gallery is so alive!"
Groups of two and three are looking at art and talking about it with one another. Walt notes that they have seen a box depicted in one of the paintings in another gallery.

"Come with me," he calls out. "We want to leave time for you to go the gift shop!"

The group very slowly follows him into the next gallery.

GALLERY 5

Walt stops just inside the gallery door and waits for the group to gather around him. He talks about the artists displayed and describes a few of their techniques, then leads the group into the next gallery.

GALLERY 6

This is another large, divided gallery, much like Gallery 4. Walt notes that there is a school group on the other side but tells the docent there he will work around her. Again he stands by the entrance, gathers the group, and provides a brief overview of the gallery. He concludes by asking them to "take a look at the styles here." They look about on their own for a few minutes.

"What I'll do [now]—I'll take you upstairs to see the Aboriginal and Inuit art. Let's set out there now. There are shopping times and there are art times!" he says, leading the group into the next gallery.

GALLERY 7

In a space similar to Gallery 2, Walt gathers the group by the door and begins, "I want to point out some new influences here. This is the development of the next group of artists, which included women."

"This looks like that game—what is it? Memory?" a group member asks, referring to one artwork.

"This is a painting by the son of [artist's name]," replies Walt. "And this is a self-portrait of [artist's name]. Interesting placement by the curator. It looks as if he's saying, 'Did I give birth to someone who did that?" Walt walks down the gallery and says, "This one creates the most divergent feelings. Some want to tear it off the wall. Some just stand and look at it."

"Looks like an ink blot to me!" comments a group member.

Walt asks the group to follow him up the ramp to the second floor.

ON THE RAMP

The ramp is three or four storeys tall. On one side are the log walls of the building, on the other is a glass wall looking out into the forest. As he walks, Walt comments on the log beams as well as the view from the windows, focusing on how the landscapes depicted in the gallery relate to what they see outside.
**GALLERY 8**

This is a very large gallery—about fifty by forty feet—with a high cathedral ceiling. Again Walt stands to the right of the entrance and the group gathers around him.

"This is very contemporary work . . .," he begins and continues on to describe three of the paintings within sight of the group.

"What does it mean?" queries a group member, referring to another work not discussed by Walt.

"It's something," Wait pauses. "It's something. I could make it up, but I really don't know. You have to really study it."

There are three other tour groups in the gallery at the moment, but Walt's group spreads out and looks on their own. Wait stands in front of one very large painting with a controversial subject and talks quietly with the three members of his group who are studying it.

"The curator says there is more to First Nations art than legends," he concludes.

"Let's head into Inuit art now." They follow him into the next gallery

**GALLERY 9**

This gallery is about thirty feet square with the same cathedral ceiling. There are artworks on the walls and several sculptures in cases in the centre of the room. Again Wait gathers the group just inside the entrance and talks about the Inuit people, their art, and the materials they use. He glances around the gallery. There are three other tour groups in the relatively small space.

"Let's take a few minutes and just look around here and then we'll go off from here," he decides. After a few moments of allowing the group to look on their own, he says to the tour guide, "Okay, I guess it's time to move out now. I hope you'll come back—maybe the next time there's a conference in town."

"Thank you, Walt," she replies, "for your 'teasing look' at the Art Gallery. We've enjoyed it thoroughly!" Everyone smiles and nods.

On his way out, Wait stops in the Loft. School tours have almost concluded for this term, so the Docent Coordinator has set out some cookies and cake as a token of her gratitude. He stops to sample a cookie and then prepares to leave for the day.

**Pedagogical Reasoning Behind Walt's Tour**

Using Shulman's model, Walt comprehends the purpose of this adult tour to be the enhancement of whatever learning is desired by the members of the group:
They are coming to learn something that’s absolutely theirs. . . . They want to learn something. They want to see something . . . new; therefore they’re learning something and I’m just trying to enhance their learning. (Int-AGW2a, 65–74)

In order to do this, he aims to bring at least some of the learners along but not to throw the rest off (Int-AGW2a, 178), not to destroy their curiosity (Int-AGW2a, 712). This is because he feels “curiosity is learning’s most important component” (FN-AGW3, 145). Curiosity may lead to the ability to “make decisions on how to solve a problem” (Int-AGW1b, 299) which in turn allows for one to learn independently (Int-AGW2a, 83–90).

At the Country Art Gallery, this means he wants learners to become enthused and involved, and ultimately to be able to use this and other museums and galleries on their own (Int-AGW1b, 313–18).

In order to do this, he believes that the “subject matters” (Int-AGW2a, 298–336) because the tour group is interested in the artworks and the artists. Accordingly, his preparation entails reviewing the outline the night before to determine the key subject-matter themes for the tour as determined by the tour writer:

The person who put [the tour] together had one focus and I think . . . that is then for the individual to take that, to cover those things that are there in whatever way they can best do it, as long as they’re all covered in whatever way. And so I spent a lot of time just getting ready . . . . (Int-AGW2a, 298–336)

However, he does not feel bound by the predetermined structure of the tour. For him structuring and segmenting the tour according to his own understandings is necessary to ensure that it is an interactive learning experience. Otherwise, the tour could be done by a robot:

[The group has] taken an hour or two or three to travel to be with me. ME being the Country Art Gallery. . . . I do not want them to waste their time, so I must be ready. . . . It is a respect for them. . . . you can walk in on someone and if they’re doing the same droning thing—“Okay, you’re here and I’m here and we have an hour and here’s my hour”—and you start. It’s almost like a Barbie doll, and you pull the string on the back and it just talks for an hour and you say, “Thank you very much” and off you go home. Well, this adult group, the lady who was running the adult group said she had been there many times, but she had LEARNED stuff today. (Int-AGW2a, 298–336)
Like Bern, Walt initially chooses artworks that will represent his main points. Part of his selection process is based on his own need to stay interested in and excited about the art being discussed.

Everybody has a favourite. . . . I have a number of them and . . . sometimes, so that I don’t get bored with myself, I change the things I’m doing. (Int-AGW2, 1543–72)

A general tour like this one also offers him the latitude to choose the galleries he will emphasize. Walt does try to reflect what he sees as the storyline of the overall Gallery in such a tour. Although he feels that the overall form and pattern of the building follow a chronological, linear order (Int-AGW2b, 648–708), in certain galleries he cannot find a pattern. For example, in Gallery 7 we see him grappling with difficult questions about the art because he finds it difficult to fit them into the story or the narrative he has conceived:

. . . so many styles, so many happening, and they’ve walked through six galleries of things that were representational for the most part . . . you saw a progression up to there . . . All of a sudden, here, you see thirty different artists, all these different things, they’re side by side; there doesn’t seem to be any rhyme or reason to any of it. Everything up until now has been patterned. (Int-AGW2b, 596–602)

Again, in Gallery 8, Walt finds the controversial subject matter of the artworks to be so personally disturbing that it is hard for him to weave it into the story of the gallery. We see him temporarily at a loss for words:

“It’s something,” Walt pauses. “It’s something. I could make it up but I really don’t know. You have to really study it.”

Usually, he prefers to not “go near [Gallery 8] at all” (Int-AGW2b, 767).

Walt selects his mode of instruction from a repertoire that he has built by “tucking away” techniques that work well (Int-AGW2b, 862). Much of his selection is based on adaptation to learner characteristics. Walt has had little information beforehand about this group: “I didn’t know how many there were. All I had was ‘a group of adults’ . . . (Int-AGW2a, 1119–21). Therefore he spends several minutes in the foyer finding out more about them and then tailoring the tour to their needs:

. . . you have to adapt to a variety of different situations. . . . With [a group] that comes in off the spot, you have a few minutes to try and line
them up, find out where they’re coming from and get into it. . . . you have a little less than five minutes to get them . . . . You got to get them, get their mood, see where they’re coming from, get how they feel about being there, and then get your venue going to get a hold, because they’re there for . . . an hour and either it’s going to be a comfortable time or it’s going to be [slight pause] hell. (Int-AGW2a, 233–53)

This adaptation and tailoring in turn affects the preparation of his material, particularly the ways in which he structures and segments his presentation and clarifies his purposes, because his goal is to help them learn what it is they want to know. Once he feels he understands the learning goals of the group then they are what he follows.

Walt’s active instruction reflects this ongoing adaptation and tailoring. Walt feels that it is important to connect on a personal level with these learners. To do this, he is willing to share a part of his own life experience as, for example, in the foyer when he speaks of his father and about his own career in education (Int-AGW2, 1408–21). His humour is also an essential element of making this personal connection:

You’re reacting to them as adults, you’re reacting to them like people. And the sense of humour thing has to come in there. Again, this is a personal thing, the personal will be there. You wanted to be treated as a person. [sighs] . . . So let’s do it, let’s enjoy it. (Int-AGW2, 1450–53)

Working on this tour with neither a set choreography and activities nor a partner-interpreter, Walt is less restricted in his teaching by issues of time and space. We see him easily accommodating another docent and her school group in Gallery 6. As he says, “With me, [the use of space] doesn’t matter. I’ll do something else” (Int-AGW2b, 573–78).

Throughout the tour, Walt is evaluating and adjusting his method of instruction accordingly. Based on the group’s initial response to the artworks in Gallery 2, he allows time for individual viewing and small group discussions rather than addressing the topics outlined for him:

. . . you knew that in the second gallery when they referred to the different art techniques that they saw. . . . You knew right away that these people had an interest in art as such. They had much more of a background than most groups have, that they could relate immediately to those things that were there. That was all a part of the whole. So, therefore, I am NOT going to waste time going over elementary things when they’re not at the elementary level. (Int-AGW2a, 1625–32)
As in his initial reading of the group, he checks for student understanding in a number of ways: “You not only get the sound of the words . . . but you get body language, you get other sounds, you get sighs . . . you have to pick up on those cues” (Int-AGW2b, 420-34). As well, he watches their responses to his teaching moments and adjusts accordingly:

Wherever their interest lay, that’s what I was with. All ten weren’t going to be interested in the same thing at the same time, likely. And so if a couple came to me about something or I started teaching about one [painting], and the others all had their ears open all the time, they zeroed in . . . . They heard something that sounded like it might be interesting, if they didn’t they kept walking . . . . Their ears were open to what was happening all the time. So then you would start talking to one or two and maybe have five there in a short period of time. Or maybe just a few, or maybe all ten . . . . (Int-AGW2b, 540-57)

He reflects at the close of the tour on his experience with the group. Walt focuses on the need to adapt the tour to the adult groups who come to the gallery with specific needs and interests, some of which, like gift shopping, may not be intellectual:

I will adapt to any group . . . . they wanted to wander and look. They don’t want to be just traileled along and so we didn’t get to all the things that we normally would have got to on a general tour because they didn’t WANT to get to ALL the things. They wanted to look at things . . . . AND they were there for exactly two hours and a little bit and one part of that is the gift shop, it always is. Especially with an adult group. They want a remembrance of where they’ve been and what they’ve seen or whatever. And so that’s when I kid them, “You HAVE to go shopping! You have to have seeing and you have to have shopping”—and they laugh! (Int-AGW2a, 1577-1606)

Summary

Upon seeing this tour in print, Walt commented that he “looked like a bit of a flake” (conversation with the author, 27 October 2000). Indeed, the teaching style he employs in this example may not suit his image, developed over many years in classroom settings, of what good teaching looks like. But in trying to meet his key objective of helping adult visitors to enhance their own learning, it may be that he is experimenting with a new way of teaching in what Thomas (1991) has termed the Learning Domain (p. 173). Thus, the tidy cycle of Shulman’s model as I present it in Chapter Two, moving from comprehension
to transformation to instruction to evaluation and reflection and concluding in new
comprehensions for the teacher, may not be applicable to the work we see Walt doing on
this tour. In fact, Shulman himself argues that the direction and sequence of instruction
may be different from what he presents:

Students can literally initiate the process, proceeding by discovering, 
inventing or inquiring, to prepare their own representations and 
transformation. Then it is the role of the teacher to respond actively and 
creatively to those student initiatives. In each case the teacher needs to 
possess both the comprehension and the capacities for transformation. In 
the student-initiated case, the flexibility to respond, judge, nurture, and 
provoke students’ creativity will depend on the teacher’s own capacities for 
sympathetic transformation and interpretation. (1987, 14)

Walt’s identification of the group’s purpose as recreational learning may mean that 
his teaching has assumed a different aesthetic than that commonly applied to school 
teaching or to school tours in museums and galleries. The qualities of the situation on 
which he focuses are the enjoyment of the visitors coupled with the artworks themselves. 
The flitting, joking style he employs on this tour may be best suited to his aesthetic sense of 
proportion and balance as he goes back and forth between the group and the artworks. As 
with Bern’s tour, there is an element of performance in this adult tour that I will pursue 
below.

CASE ANALYSIS

As with the case analysis of the Community History Museum in Chapter Five, many issues 
emerge from these tour accounts and the accompanying pedagogical reasoning of Joan, 
Bern, and Walt. Again, however, I reserve discussion of most of these issues for Chapters 
Eight and Nine where I will discuss in more detail the knowledge bases of the museum 
teachers. Instead, in this analysis I focus on one aspect of the “common aesthetic” of tours 
at the Country Art Gallery in order to explore the teacher-participants’ conceptualization of 
teaching in this setting and to discover the qualities to which they attend. In this case, I am 
interested in the aesthetic of performance that emerged from the data. I then take this a step
further by discussing the implications this conceptualization of teaching may have for the concept of the museum as a site of ritual, and the implications both performance and ritual have for learning to teach in the museum setting.

**Performance and Ritual**

**Performance**

Some of the key images identified by the study’s teacher-participants at the Country Art Gallery have to do with performance. This is evident in the choreography initiated by the gallery itself, in Joan’s “personality performance” (Int-AGJ2, 122–71), in Walt’s desire to read and respond to his group, and in Bern’s concern with attracting and keeping people on his tour. I propose that these performance aspects suggest not only a recognition but a response on the part of the docents and the educator to the place of entertainment in museum activities—a theatrical aesthetic, if you will.

Traditionally, anything in the museum with entertainment value has been seen as necessary but less than rigorous. As discussed in Chapter Two, using Dewey’s theory of experience, Ansbacher (1999) refers to entertainment as the ‘spirit of play’ that has the potential to become non-educative or miseducative. As one commentator notes, “if history is entertaining there must be something wrong” (Anderson 1991, 216). And “living history”, which I will describe in more detail below, is “praised for the extensive historical research it often requires but damned as frivolous show-business entertainment” (Leon and Piatt 1989, 64). In the art museum, “museum professionals and docents continue to use lecture-type tours because of a conviction that alternative methods like inquiry, discussion, and improvisation, will not communicate enough information about the works of art” (Horn 1984, 87). Many arguments in the field of natural interpretation are also premised on differentiating interpretation from entertainment (Randall 1996; Civitarese et al. 1997; Knapp 1997; Zuefle 1997). Roberts (1997) avoids these shoals by defining entertainment
in a broader sense, as those affective and emotional aspects of museum work that "fall outside such traditional educational goals as cognitive engagement and information transfer" (p. 131).

The question of the role of entertainment in teaching is not limited to the museum world. Schoolteachers also discuss the relationship of entertainment to teaching and the need to strike a balance (Kilbourn 1998, 151). Likewise, Schwab (1978) maintains the interrelationship of appetite, emotion and reason is a critical element of teaching in the university (p. 109). Liberal education, in his estimation, begins with cultivation of the inherent pleasure of learning (p. 109; see also Langer, 1993). Its goal is not only to have students acquire knowledge but also to have them desire and seek knowledge independently (p. 109). Toward this end, the "face-to-face relation between teacher and student" (p. 110) is an important first step.

This affective, emotional relationship is part of what Roberts (1997) terms *entertainment* and it is as important to interpreters, docents, and gallery educators as to teachers in other settings. To elaborate on this important point, Schwab (1978) argues that if the student's desire to be "recognized" can be fulfilled by the teacher then the student is "grateful" for that recognition: the teacher, in turn, is grateful to the student for acknowledging him or her. For example, in interviews with me, Bern frequently referred to interpersonal relationships and their emotional and rational components:

> I go [to the Country Art Gallery] to meet people, to view new art pieces, to be stimulated mentally, to enjoy the company of those I guide on tours. For me, this exercise is . . . stimulating mentally, emotionally refreshing and intellectually gratifying. (Int-AGB1, 987 text insert)

This fits with the common assertion that "people skills" are the most important attribute of all for a docent (Williams 1984a). You have to have "patience and understanding and empathy" (Int-HMJ1, 637), agrees Jennifer.

The result of this mutual gratification is that "liking" develops between the teacher and the student (Schwab 1978, 111). Joan suggests that it may even be a particular style of touring:
You have to like people and you have to like helping them. You have to be flexible. You have to like the style—the questioning style—asking questions, going back to the kids, rather than lecturing. (Int-AGJ2, 509–13)

If the teacher is able to traverse the uncertain territory between wanting too much to be liked and not caring at all (Schwab 1978, 112), respect may then develop out of this liking. This "liking" aspect is particularly important in an ad hoc tour like Bern’s, where the audience is free to leave at any time. Bern explains:

... you have an uninvited group of people, from various backgrounds, hopefully with a common purpose i.e. to view the art and enjoy it and to be challenged with new insights and in doing so, stimulate a deeper understanding. These individuals (strangers to you) need to be WON-OVER, to invite them to meet you at some level in order to communicate and share insights. To try and do that without adequate preparation is a futile attempt. Two things may result from such an encounter, either you make a fool of yourself and become incoherent, or your group may disperse. It is thus important for you to treat your group as equals, not to be intimidating and to make this tour a learning and enjoyable experience. (Int-AGB2, 343–84 text insert)

Another challenge for museum teachers like Bern, Walt, and Joan arises when this interpersonal teacher-student relationship must be developed within the space of an hour or two. Schwab’s thinking presumes a university seminar in which the teacher and a small number of students have ten or twelve meetings to establish a relationship (Schwab 1978, 116). In the university classroom, the teacher has time to disengage the student’s liking from himself or herself and transpose it to the subject matter in question. In the short-term of the museum/gallery tour or the park program, however, there is a danger that the attraction of the learner may remain focused on the docent, interpreter, or gallery educator and not be transferred to the subject matter in question.

What we see in the case study of the Country Art Gallery are the various ways in which these museum teachers acknowledge and accommodate the need for an interpersonal relationship between the museum teacher and large, possibly fluctuating, numbers of students/learners within a truncated time frame. This is facilitated more or less by the situation in which the tour takes place. For example, Walt more easily develops an interpersonal relationship with the ten people on his booked tour. They are a relatively
small, homogeneous, group all of whom expect to remain with Walt for the full hour of the
tour. Thus Walt is able to emphasize the importance of one-to-one understanding. As he
says above:

You’re reacting to them as adults, you’re reacting to them like people. And
the sense of humour thing has to come in there. Again, this is a personal
thing—the personal will be there. You want to be treated as a person.
[sighs] . . . So let’s do it, let’s enjoy it. (Int-AGW2, 1450–53)

As a result, Walt’s tour becomes less a performance than a relationship between himself
and the small number of group members. Thus we see the give and take of the tour as he
responds to one and then another of the participants: “Wherever their interest lay, that’s
what I was with” (Int-AGW2b, 540–57). Schwab (1978) hypothesizes that it is the
“reciprocity of evocation and response which constitutes a genuine interpersonal
relationship” (p. 110).

Schwab concedes, however, that

It may be that for teachers who are consummate actors an interpersonal
relationship is not required. For such persons, it may be possible to
determine the appearance and manner appropriate to evocation of liking and
respect and to play the desired role so effectively that the student is moved
to the desired response. (p. 110)

This may begin to explain what Joan calls her personality performance which is determined
by the exigencies of time and numbers on her guided school tour:

I think I act. [long pause] I truly think it’s a performance in a way. Because
you don’t—it’s not like teaching in that you have a long-term relationship,
you have a very short-term relationship. So you have to put yourself
forward IMMEDIATELY, not halfway through the tour. It has to be within
the first few minutes. (Int-AGJ2, 122–71)

Joan feels she still responds directly to visitors and this is apparent on her tour, as when
she praises the children for choosing a different painting in Gallery 4B. However, as she
discusses her reaction to the different age groups who visit the gallery, it is clear that she
has also had to develop generic responses that might be termed acting. For example, with
students under grade 5, Joan concentrates on her “expressions and what you say and
you’re surprised at their answers and how smart they are” (Int-AGJ2, 136–37); with those
in grades 7 to 9, she "comes on like the heavy at first . . . and then I relax it" (Int-AGJ2, 146–49); and, finally, with adults, "you've got to be outgoing . . ." (Int-AGJ2, 163).

Similarly, Bern leads an ad hoc group of "uninvited strangers" that begins with fifteen participants and waxes and wanes in size as he moves through the exhibit. Like Joan, he has categorized his audience, in his case into three groups: "those who love this artist, those who hate this artist, and . . . those who don’t UNDERSTAND this artist" (FN-AGB1, 235 text insert). He then considers his response to these generic groups: "What is there that I can still tell the people to make them a little more interested?" (Int-AGB2, 768–808). I believe that he and Joan cope with the development of a relationship under these conditions by moving toward the performance end of the scale. Yet, as discussed above, performance is often viewed negatively, as in "putting on a show." Let me consider the meaning of performance in a different sense.

Goffman (1974) describes performance as taking place within what he terms a "theatrical frame":

[T]hat arrangement which transforms an individual into a stage performer, the latter, in turn, being an object that can be looked at in the round and at length without offence, and looked to for engaging behaviour . . . A line is ordinarily maintained between a staging area where the performance proper occurs and the audience region where the watchers are located. The central understanding is that the audience has neither the right nor the obligation to participate directly in the dramatic action occurring on the stage . . . At certain junctures the audience can openly give applause to the performers . . . (Goffman 1974, 124–25)

This frame structures the experience of the individuals involved (p. 13). One individual assumes the role of the docent as he or she understands it (p. 575); in response, the role of the visitor becomes that of "onlooker" (p. 130) or audience member. We see this theatrical frame emerge most clearly on Bern's tour, as expressed through the minimal participation of the audience and their applause at the conclusion of the tour. In my own experiences as both an observer and a museum teacher, this theatrical frame is a common approach for visitors and museum teachers on such ad hoc adult tours.
Williams (1984a) has discounted such tours as merely “amusements” (p. 49) and Ansbacher (1999) cautions against an approach that may dead-end in fun, yet it is clear that for Bern, Walt, and Joan, enjoying the tour is a means to an end—learning is that end. As Walt says, “the subject matters” (Int-AGW2a, 298–336). Therefore it may be helpful to cast their performances not only within a theatrical frame, as their metaphors suggest, but also within the frame of ritual.

Ritual

Museum-going has been described as a “civilizing ritual” (Duncan 1995) replete with its own “script” or a “score” (p. 2) that prompts participants, both learners and teachers, to enact a performance. Peers (1996) describes interpretation by Native interpreters at historic sites as a “cultural performance” (p. 226) in which interpreters are “playing themselves” (p. 230) through the representation of their own agendas. I argue that such performance is not limited to Native interpreters and that, similarly, Bern, Walt, and Joan act out personal scripts for the gallery visits based on their own agendas, on their own understanding of the rituals of museum-going.

Ritual is defined loosely as “formalized symbolic performance” (Quantz 1999, 495). It is seen as a particularly important aspect of “live interpretation,” which includes certain kinds of guided tours along with other techniques such as interactive characters, theatrical vignettes, third-person interpretation, hands-on animation, songs, stories, plays, and performances (Blais 1997, 180). Like entertainment, ritual appeals primarily to the appetites and emotions. As Blais writes of live interpretation, “each technique has its own language and takes a different form according to its own intended audience” (p. 180), but they are all a “means of transmitting knowledge, of sharing enthusiasm, [and] more importantly of giving life to emotions” (p. 179).

What is often overlooked, however, is that ritual has the power both to connect as well as to disturb. On the one hand, ritual may be interpreted as an act that contributes to
feelings of social solidity and connectedness (Quantz 1999, 497). Joan and Bern seek to connect the learners on their respective tours to the knowledge held by the art museum, both of the art and artists and of how to interpret the art. Both help to connect the learner to ways of knowing in the arts. On the other hand, ritual performance has the potential to "reinvigorate meaning" and promote "change at the margins" of the museum (Harrison 1999). Ritual may be seen as the point at which transformation is possible (Quantz 1999, 499). Furthermore, the ritual of museum-going has even greater potential for challenge because "the tempo of the experience is controlled not by the person orchestrating the event but by the visitor himself" (Graburn 1984, 181). In speaking of his work at the Canadian Museum of Civilization, David Parry wrote:

Our presentations consciously and constantly make the attempt to provoke visitors into a fresh interaction with the museum through surprise and a kind of subversive activity—challenging their assumptions about what a museum is, challenging their responses to it, challenging their interpretations of history and culture . . . (Blais 1997, 25)

The Challenge of Professional Development in Performance & Ritual

I argue that the teacher-participants in this study recognize that there is an element of the performance inherent in all museum and gallery tours. We see the theatrical frame of the museum represented in the kinds of images introduced in the first paragraph of this section. The line between docent and actor is blurred even more when we discover that Bern has played the part of Churchill to accompany an exhibition of photographs at the Country Art Gallery (Int-AG1, 790). Yet there are challenges inherent in establishing not only methods of evaluation for these aspects of performance and ritual but also staff development and appraisal (Leon and Piatt 1989). As Thomas (1991) argues, in the Learning Domain the teacher and the program are the first to be evaluated and, if necessary, changed if the learner does not learn (p. 114). How may the success of these emotional and aesthetic responses on the part of the museum teacher be judged?
When evaluating the success of performances in the museum, Quinn (1981) considers the impact of the performance, its effectiveness in presenting emotional as opposed to factual information, the numbers of visitors attracted and how long they stayed. Likewise, Randall (1996) argues for measures that depend on expressions of commendation, repeat visits, and willingness of visitors to undergo expense in terms of time, money, and effort (p. 7). Teacher-participants identify markedly similar measures when considering the visitors' capacity for enjoyment. As illustrated more fully in Chapter Ten, the chief indicator of success is whether or not the visitor returns. But interpreters also watch for signs of enthusiasm and involvement (Int-AGW2a, 442), “eye contact and the way they’re grouped around you” (Int-NCD2, 144–45), the way learners group around exhibits (Int-AGJ2, 1765–1800), and whether or not visitors drift away (Int-HMH3, 963) or stay with the tour. As Bern remarks, on a successful tour “timing is nothing, [visitors] will stay with me . . .” (Int-AGB1, 230–40). On the other hand, failure can feel like hell: “You got to get them, get their mood, see where they’re coming from, get how they feel about being there, and then get your venue going . . . because they’re there for . . . an hour and either it’s going to be a comfortable time or it’s going to be . . . hell” (Int-AGW2a, 233–53). Yet this practical knowledge of the tour as performance seems rarely to be utilized by the representatives of the site responsible for evaluation of the interpreters, docents, and educators. Instead, particularly at the Country Art Gallery, ongoing feedback and evaluation tend to focus on the accuracy of information presented along with suggestions for practical improvements to the tour (see Chapter Four). I will return to these questions in Chapter Nine.
CHAPTER SEVEN

THE NATURE CENTRE—THE PEDAGOGICAL REASONING OF INTERPRETERS

In this chapter I extend my examination of the processes of pedagogical reasoning and actions to the interpreters of the Nature Centre using Shulman’s model as a starting point. The Nature Centre staff refer to their booked activities as programs rather than tours and so I will use that terminology throughout. The focus is on two programs conducted by Dwight and Alice respectively.

THE PROGRAMS

Dwight’s Program

SYNOPSIS

The characters in this program account are Dwight, a teacher-participant; Neil, his partner-interpreter; twenty grade 8 students; and their schoolteacher.

The setting is the Nature Centre on a sunny winter morning with snow still on the ground. Today Dwight and Neil are conducting the Solar Energy program, which they have both conducted a number of times before. Together they will be working with forty grade 8 students. At the same time another forty students from the same school will take part in a nature hike with two other interpreters. After lunch, the two groups will switch
and Dwight and Neil will conduct the Solar Energy program again this afternoon for the second group.

Solar Energy is a half-day program designed by a coordinator at the Nature Centre for students from grade 5 through to O.A.C. The following goals form one part of a multipage document that contains information on solar energy along with suggested stops and activities for students.

**Solar Energy Program**

**Goals**

- Renewable energy demonstrations provide students with an opportunity to see and understand renewable energy technology first hand—focus on Solar Electrics (Photovoltaic)
- Skills practised—observations, comparison, investigation, experimentation

Ninety-six grade 8 students and their five adult leaders arrive in the foyer of the Nature Centre and are greeted by the four interpreters who will be leading their tours. The group is asked to divide into four smaller groups along school-class lines. Dwight and Neil lead their two groups into the centre’s theatre, where Dwight introduces the program and they all view a short movie on the subject of solar energy. Dwight then takes his group outside and across the field to the Energy Renewable Cottage, outside of which students conduct a series of experiments on solar conductors. After they present the results of their experiments, everyone moves inside the cottage to look at and discuss solar-powered applications. Finally Dwight leads them to a second site to view more applications of solar power. He decides against a third site and they return to the centre for lunch.

**Program Account**

This is one of three programs I followed with Dwight. Noteworthy is Dwight’s ongoing response to the interplay amongst the structure of the program write-up, the unpredictability of the natural setting, and his expectations of both students and schoolteachers.
Dwight is sitting with a small group of interpreters in the greenhouse lunchroom of the Nature Centre, which is adjacent to the front desk. He is wearing corduroy pants and a fleece vest over a Nature Centre sweatshirt. Over coffee, the interpreters talk informally amongst themselves about what they will be doing this morning.

Through the main doors a school group enters and Dwight gets up and walks over to the counter. He calls out to them, "You guys want to come over here, please?"

Picking up two bins, he leads them from the counter over to an area in the open space. The students begin seating themselves on the floor in a semicircle facing the teachers. Dwight walks back to the front counter and looks at the binder of school bookings there. Then he walks back to join the three other interpreters with whom he has been sitting earlier. All four of them introduce themselves to the five adult leaders of the school group. One interpreter explains to the leaders that their group will be divided into four groups, two of which will be doing the Nature Walk and two the Solar Energy program this morning. They will switch this afternoon. There are ninety-six students in all.

"We'll be working together in groups in the Solar Energy program," Dwight tells one of the leaders. "We need a good dynamic. . . . It's better to stay within classes."

"My class over here. Quick . . . Let's go!" one schoolteacher calls out.

As the students move into line behind their teacher, Dwight and Neil agree they will go into the theatre together.

**THE THEATRE**

Dwight and Neil lead their groups into the theatre and ask them to fill up the last four rows. Dwight stands facing them, in the fifth or sixth row. Neil stands at the back of the theatre.

"Good morning and welcome to the Nature Centre," Dwight begins. "My name is Dwight. Neil and I will be working together." He gestures to Neil at the back. "You'll be doing a Solar program this morning and a Nature Walk this afternoon. . . . I'm holding in my hand the most expensive source of energy on planet Earth. What is it?"

Dwight is holding up his closed fist as he talks and walks back and forth along the row. He faces students and points to those with their hands up for answers. Students offer a few answers but finally say "batteries". He discusses batteries briefly.

Two teachers are standing at the back of the theatre, facing Dwight.

"Come on, sit down," Dwight calls to them

"We're all right!" the schoolteachers call back, laughing.

"No, come on," Dwight insists. "You're using up energy! You're going to need it today."

The schoolteachers sit down in the last row.

Dwight discusses energy, water cycles and renewable energy. He presents a series of questions.
"You guys . . . this is like asking where food comes from and having you say 'the grocery store.'"

Dwight walks along the fifth row, facing the students. He asks more questions, pointing to the students with their hands up. He repeats their answers.

"We're living almost in the next millennium. These are things we have to think about!"

Dwight explains that the focus today will be renewable energy and its relationship to conservation. He talks about the replacement by the Nature Centre of the incandescent lights with fluorescent ones and the resulting financial savings. Neil brings samples of the two types of bulbs over to Dwight and he shows them to the group. Then they switch on the audiovisual show. It runs for about ten minutes.

"I hope you enjoyed that. It's a pretty good presentation to prepare for the program. Now button up and we'll go outside."

Dwight leads the group outside. He walks along the path at a brisk pace ahead of the group, not stopping until he reaches the Energy Renewable Cottage.

OUTSIDE ENERGY RENEWABLE COTTAGE

They are standing around outside a small cottage. On one side of the building, is a large black panel that is tilted slightly. Behind it is a windmill and to the right there is an exhibit box with push buttons. A number of small wooden boxes are set up around the area.

Dwight turns to explain to the schoolteacher how the program will be set up. As they talk, the students stand in small groups, stamping their feet against the cold.

"Don't talk, please," the schoolteacher says as he begins to divide them into small groups.

After they have been divided, Dwight numbers the groups and sends one person from each off to get a clipboard from the veranda of the cottage.

"Listen up. Turn around so you're looking at me."

"Turn around, please," repeats the schoolteacher.

Dwight stands facing the cottage, with three of the wooden boxes in front of him. The students stand in a large semicircle facing him, with their backs to the cottage.

"You're going to research what is a good solar collector."

Dwight holds up a clipboard with a sheet on it. He goes through each step on the sheet, using the experiment in front of him as an example.

"I don't want to go around and have people say they don't understand." One group doesn't have a watch. "Use 'steamboats' if you don't have a watch. Each group must have a recorder and a timer. You can all read the thermometer . . . Let's get busy. The sun goes in and we're in trouble. Everyone understand this?"

"Read—make hypothesis—record." the schoolteacher repeats

Each group goes to a set of boxes. Dwight walks over to each group in turn.
"Remember," Dwight says, "you have to be consistent . . . Don't stand in front, you'll compromise it . . . All at the same angle—understand?"

"Do we need to worry about air temperature?" asks a student

"No, don't worry about that today." Then he turns to the last group standing with the teacher. "Let's get started!"

"We were waiting for you . . ." the schoolteacher begins, his words trailing off.

Students are working together. In every group each seems to have a role. Dwight circulates amongst them all—a little time with each. The schoolteacher moves, too, but stays longer with each group.

Dwight has given them ten minutes to record temperature changes in three boxes. Each group has a differently constructed set of boxes; for example, different colours, different thickness of glass, etc. After about five minutes, Dwight goes around again.

"What are you finding? . . . What hypothesis did you have? . . . Why did you choose that? . . . Make any difference? . . . Is it logical? So, if . . . . they should be . . . ? Excellent logic!"

Dwight, speaking loudly, tells each group they will be making a brief presentation about findings and explains what they should include. One group cheers as they read their last temperature.

Dwight describes the expected format of presentations and directs everyone to the first set of boxes. They all gather there, facing the boxes. Each group reports on their experiment. After each presentation, Dwight asks, "So, a solar collector should have what?"

As they are working, an elderly couple walks by along the path.

At the third experiment Dwight asks, "Everybody think in their own mind which ought to be better—so we're all involved . . ."

Each time, he asks the students in the group if they all agree. In this third group, the members began with an hypothesis that they later found to be incorrect.

"Everyone agree?" Dwight asks the group members. And then turning to the whole group, he asks, "All have that? The hypothesis was wrong, but that's important, too. To prove it or not—that's very important in science."

Neil and his group arrive at the cottage but remain to one side until Dwight concludes. A small group of girls begins to giggle. Dwight ignores them and reviews all the elements of a good solar collector.

"You've done very well in these experiments. You're to be congratulated," he tells the group.

**INSIDE ENERGY RENEWABLE COTTAGE**

Dwight takes his students inside the cottage as Neil's group moves in to do the experiments. The interior of the cottage is about fifteen by twenty feet. In it are several appliances and a
wood-burning stove. Dwight stands in front of the windows of the cottage and the students arrange themselves in a semicircle facing him.

"You're an architect, designing a cottage. How can you make the best use of solar energy?" asks Dwight. But the students are talking and looking around and few appear to hear the question.

"Ssssh, don't screw up!" the schoolteacher chides them.

Dwight goes on to talk about other features of the cottage.

"Question! What kind of trees should you plant in front of the cottage? . . . Only four people know? Think! You've all got the answer."

They respond slowly but Dwight discusses their ideas with them. Dwight asks the schoolteacher to go outside and get the small solar panel. In a minute the schoolteacher returns with it.

"There's what you designed outside . . . ," Dwight says, holding the panel up. He goes on to discuss the appliances in the cottage.

"How much would it cost to install a panel like this?" the schoolteacher asks.

"Around $7,000. But it used to cost $70,000! . . . But forget the cottage! What about the Third World? What does this mean for those countries?"

Dwight enters into an animated discussion with about half of the group. The rest are looking around the room. The schoolteacher pulls one student over and begins admonishing him.

". . . Finally, over here," Dwight calls out. "Someone who hasn't put their hand up? Come on, risk something!" One student volunteers to test the light bulbs for the group. There is general discussion about the properties of each.

"Now," Dwight continues, "you have a few minutes to look around or you can sit down for a minute. Any questions?" The schoolteacher walks over to talk to him. Some students sit down on the floor.

The schoolteacher calls out, "Sheets, please. Be sure your names are on it—all your names."

After a few minutes, Dwight asks the students to follow him as he leaves the cottage and sets out across the nearby field.

THE FARMHOUSE

Dwight stops in an open area near a farmhouse. He is standing beside a small solar panel on a swivel and behind him are two more banks of solar cells and an information panel. As he waits for the rest of the students to catch up, he talks quietly to a small group.

"Okay, this is a solar panel," he says as the group assembles around him. "All together these panels are called a solar array. Who can stop this panel from working?" A student covers it up with her coat. "She's proving what we just learned!"
Dwight explains the use of solar power in the farmhouse and notes connections to what was said in the movie at the beginning of the program. "We'll have a couple of minutes here to look around." The students walk around and several play with the solar panel. "Solar energy is clean and efficient. Think about it when you go back to school. What could your school be doing? Maybe you could do a school project on solar energy. . . . Okay, let's go back now."

Dwight leads the group along another path. There he stops briefly to point out and talk about some wind turbines across the field. "The Nature Centre tries to practise what they preach," Dwight says to them. "In terms of nature conservation—you'll see that this afternoon. About renewable energy—you've seen that here this morning. Any questions? . . . I don't want you to go home and tell your parents that you didn't do anything today. . . . Now, are we ready to get a new source of energy—called lunch!"

The group walks back to the Nature Centre. On the way, the schoolteacher comments to me, "I'd love to work here! Beautiful—to be out of the classroom . . . I like field trips. Our principal is very supportive. . . . He'd like us to take a field trip every week, but the curriculum just doesn't allow that. We're just finishing a unit on experiments and starting on heat and light. That's why the kids didn't know all of the answers today. . . . We do try to take a field trip at least once a month, though."

Everyone arrives back at the Interpretive Centre. Dwight goes to eat his lunch before repeating the program this afternoon with the second group.

PEDAGOGICAL REASONING BEHIND DWIGHT'S PROGRAM

Dwight comprehends that the main purpose of this program for the Nature Centre is to supplement the school curriculum (Int-NCD2, 30). In the program he "ties it all together" for the students by providing information, which may be "pretty cut and dried", but "in a way that's interesting" and spontaneous (Int-NCD1, 39–40). Moreover, from his own perspective, he believes that he is teaching the scientific method. It is important to him that students be engaged by the process and, through it, interact with one another as learners (Int-NCD2, 846–915). Through this, he hopes that students will see the effect of science on their own lives: a "carry-over experience," as he calls it (Int-NCD2, 195–201). For example, in this program he wants to demonstrate how solar power could be useful not
only for a remote Ontario cottage but also for development in the Third World (Int-NCD2, 314).

Dwight originally prepared for the program by reading the write-up and taking notes on the information, from which he then created his own set of index cards. In doing so, he not only clarified his own purpose in doing the program, as discussed above, but also structured and segmented it according to key points in the subject matter. He used these cards until he felt comfortable doing the program (Int-NCD2, 699). Today his focus has been on issues of representation concerning the stops he will make along the trail and the props he will use in the program. He must also negotiate with his partner-interpreters about access to certain popular trails.

While the write-up sets out the information required for each program, technical decisions about who will do what, where, and when are left to the discretion of the interpreters. Jointly, the four interpreters for this large group have decided beforehand that Dwight and Neil will do the Solar Energy program in both the morning and afternoon, because some of the others would prefer not to do it. Dwight admits that "there's about five programs I like to do out of the twenty-five odd programs that are there" (Int-NCD2, 548–87). It also makes set-up easier when the same two people are responsible for both morning and afternoon. However, it is only this morning that Neil and Dwight have decided between themselves how the program will be divided and in which order they will each do it, "sometimes people feel more confident doing something clockwise rather than counter-clockwise—for whatever reason" (Int-NCD2, 548–87).

Many of the choices Dwight makes require an acute awareness of the environment—the situation—in which he and the students will be placed today. This requires juggling amongst a number of primarily physical factors, like the accessibility of the trails, the weather, and the equipment required (Int-NCD2, 641–68). Today, the first thing he did was "pray for sun" because the experiments all depend on sunlight. Had it been raining, he would have had to set up solar boxes with lights inside the Interpretive
Centre, which he feels is "kind of cheating" (Int-NCM, 509-35). Dwight makes a sharp distinction between teaching in the Nature Centre's main building and teaching in the outdoors. For him, the Interpretive Centre is merely a prelude to the outdoor experiences for which students have come: "If they arrive late," he says, "we very often waive the indoor component entirely . . . they're there for the out-of-doors experience." Although the Interpretive Centre offers a warm, dry alternative on bad-weather days, "it's always better to go down to the river and do [the program] there" (Int-NC2, 742-70).

Dwight selects an interactive approach to this program that emphasizes experimentation in small groups:

It's more that you're not telling the students, you're not lecturing to them, you're trying to get them to experience . . . the area, the world, the environment that they're in. So it's probably more spontaneous, less structured, than is normal in the classroom. (Int-NC1, 23-43)

He feels that experience and experimentation go hand in hand (FN-NC3, 330), that students learn by taking part in activities, by interacting with others (Int-NC1, 307-15). However, Dwight feels it is incumbent upon him to provide some structure, even on nature hikes. Not only are there time constraints—a program or hike is generally scheduled to be completed within two hours—but the students and schoolteachers expect him to address the advertised theme (Int-NC2, 244).

In terms of adaptation and tailoring to student characteristics, like interpreters at the Community History Museum and docent-educators at the Country Art Gallery, Dwight has had little advance information on this group. Instead, as we see him doing inside the Energy Renewable Cottage, he allows for some time that's "hands off me doing the presentation" so that the program can be geared to student "interests rather than your interests" (Int-NC2, 1058-69) (even though some may choose to just stand and talk with their friends).

However, Dwight's approach is not to ask the schoolteacher what he would like to do or where she is in her school curriculum. Rather, Dwight and his partner-interpreters tell the group leaders what they will be doing that day. They hope that the schoolteacher will
already have told the students exactly what they will be doing so that they will be aware and comfortable with the program (Int-NCD2, 560-4). Furthermore, Dwight does not adapt to the schoolteacher's characteristics. As we see in the theatre exchange, he prefers to treat the schoolteachers in the program as students. He wants them to take part and have experiences, too:

I want them to do everything the students do. . . . on all the leading experiences I make sure the teacher's involved in it as well. . . . They're going to have an experience. . . . I don't want the schoolteacher standing at the top looking over there. . . . I want them listening, too. I want them part of the program. I don't want them to be the disciplinarian. I'm hoping I can achieve that aspect of the program - keeping [the students'] attention - I don't need them. . . . Their presence is still very important - trying to gain the confidence of the kids, their respect, their involvement. (Int-NCD2, 792-809)

Of the eight teacher-participants involved with me in this study, Dwight seems to be most conscious of his acts of active instruction. For example, he feels that the introduction in the theatre is a key element in the program because it sets the stage for the theme to be developed. This is particularly critical at the Nature Centre, he believes, because interpreters are using the same trails that were used yesterday to do “Backpacking” or “Endangered Species.” These same students may have already walked the same trails two years previously. For them to learn something new today, he has “got to really focus on what the theme is of the program - the props and everything else that goes with it.” (Int-NCD2, 669-77) Similarly, he takes time to conclude and summarize the experiments outside the Energy Renewable Cottage because the students will not have “any real formal follow-up for these programs” and so he likes to have them complete them as much as possible on site (Int-NCD2, 115-225). For his own satisfaction, he wants to achieve a sense of completion, of accomplishment, that the students might have that “carry-over experience” described above (Int-NCD2, 195-201). A final example is his approach to questioning. Inside the Energy Renewable Cottage Dwight prefers to “stick with the question because that gets them involved” although he knows that may “alienate” some students. He wants to “give them the chance to observe and then give the answer . . . the
observation gives them the answer." Furthermore, when they have to think it through and articulate an answer, the solution becomes their own.

You can assume that they're bringing something to their experience. And their experience they should be able to express . . . There's been a lot of talking—schoolteacher-student information stuff—turn it the other way around . . . it gets them beyond the one-word answer. They have to think through something and articulate it—structure something. (Int-NCD2, 932-72)

Dwight evaluates both student understanding and his own performance throughout the program, adjusting as he sees fit. For example, at the third student group's presentation of their experiments, Dwight changes his approach. In retrospect, he says "I should have done it right from the start. I think of things as I go along." By asking students to come to their own conclusion before rather than after the presentation, he gets them to risk something, to commit, and to become more involved in the process, not only with him but with one another. He sees this as part of teaching the scientific method: "You have to make your own hypothesis. They all can see—very simple—and it can be applied." (Int-NCD2, 846-915). At the end of the Photovoltaics segment, Dwight decides to return to the Interpretive Centre rather than going on to the wind turbines, because he judges that the students have had enough for today. The program, he feels, is a little difficult for them based on the responses they have given (Int-NCD2, 1099-118).

At the conclusion of the program he reflects upon the morning and how he may use his experience when he repeats the program in the afternoon. He is still happy with how the morning group have done their experiments and feels that this has been the main point of the program. It is especially important, in his opinion, because so little science is actually done in the schools. However, because there is less time for the afternoon program, he may have to replace actually doing the experiments with discussion about the equipment, the hypotheses, and what might happen. He muses that there may be too much information in the rest of the program; he may lecture too much and the movie may have too many facts. Next time he thinks he might move the movie to the end of the program "when they're tired and want to put their feet up . . ." (FN-NCD3, 415-24).
SUMMARY

To reiterate, Shulman (1987) defines pedagogical content knowledge as “the capacity of the teacher to transform the content knowledge he or she possesses into forms that are pedagogically powerful and yet adaptive to the variations in ability and background presented by the students” (p. 15). In Dwight’s program we see the introduction of another element that must be considered in the pedagogical content knowledge of the nature interpreter: that of the physical environment itself. Dwight’s transformation of the program write-up entails not only an understanding of the discipline-based subject matter involved but also a knowledge of the environment itself. He must know not only about it but also how to get through it. Dwight must be able to adapt and tailor his tour to the qualities of the physical environment just as Shulman proposes he must to the characteristics of the learners. For example, the sun is a critical element in the experiments conducted outside the Energy Renewable Cottage. Yet this openness to change is poised in a dialectic relationship with the structure required for the program. Eisner (1994) argues that it is this vacillation between a “climate that welcomes exploration and risk-taking and cultivates the disposition to play” and the form and rules of the “game” that is the key to artistic practice in teaching (p. 162). As Dwight relates:

... when you’re looking at the natural part of it there’s the sense of the season, the sense of the day. You might see the deer, you may not see the deer. [laughs] You see the deer, you talk about deer. You don’t see the deer, you talk about scat or tracks or pull out the foot from your bag and flash it out so kids can poke around about deer.... So it’s probably more spontaneous—the nature hike—through those activities that related to walks, whereas the Power Trip is more structured and therefore, in many ways... less interesting because it is more structured.... Stuff just lacks interaction with kids and what you’re doing. (Int - NCD2, 51–74)
Alice's Program

SYNOPSIS

The characters on this program are Alice, a teacher-participant; fifteen schoolchildren in grades 1 to 6 from a local private school; their schoolteacher; and four parent chaperones. The school is a frequent user of the services of the Nature Centre and this particular teacher has been here before. Because it is such a small group, Alice is their sole interpreter.

It is a cold weekday afternoon in late fall with snow on the ground. Alice is feeling the effects of a lingering cold. As well, she and Dwight have already done a mapping program earlier this morning. This is the first week after the end of a teachers’ protest and many public schools have had to cancel programs planned at the Nature Centre in order to make up for lost time in the classroom. The interpreters have had little work over the past two weeks and there is little hope that there will be much change in the situation before the new year.

“Mammals” is a half-day program designed to meet the needs of grades 1 to 6. These goals are excerpted from a multi-page document that contains background information along with suggested stops and activities:

Mammals Program

Goals
- Investigate the features, habitats, and adaptations of mammals. Focus may be on specific mammals if requested.
- Skills practised—observation, identification, teamwork.

A significant portion of this program takes place in the Interpretive Centre classroom where Alice teaches a lesson on mammals using slides, word cards, and specimens. Once outside, however, she moves beyond the program write-up in order to focus with the group on the exploration of a beaver dam.
Program Account

This is one of six programs I followed with Alice. Noteworthy are the contrasts between her program and Dwight’s. These contrasts emanate in part from the content and organization of the two tours as they have been designed by the Education Coordinator. For example, Dwight’s Solar Energy program utilizes a highly structured format based on the human-made and physically accessible technology at the site, whereas Alice’s Mammals program is much more loosely structured and is based on the sometimes elusive evidence of the mammals in residence on the property. Furthermore, the Solar Energy program assumes a high-school audience with a discipline-based interest in geography or environmental science as opposed to the more general elementary-school science orientation of the Mammals program. However, other contrasts have more to do with the two interpreters’ different understandings of the commonplaces of teaching, like the role of the schoolteacher on the two tours and the interpreters’ relationships with the learners. I will discuss these in more detail in Chapters Nine and Ten, but I note them for the reader now.

An adult leading a small group of children approaches the front counter at the Nature Centre. The receptionist announces over the P.A. “Alice, your group is here.” Alice arrives shortly thereafter. She approaches the teacher directly and they talk.

“How long do you have today?” Alice asks her. “Uh-huh. And you’re studying beavers? Well, I’ve just seen some traces of beavers and muskrats that I think your group will find very interesting. This is Chris. She’s researching how people learn in settings like this.” The teacher and I shake hands. “I’ll be with you in just a minute,” she says to the schoolteacher and then turns to me.

“Come on over here with me,” she says and leads me over to a small counter in the open space to bundle brochures for the group to take with them when they leave. She talks to me as she bundles. “There have been some changes in the plans. Another interpreter told me that there were some signs of beaver activity, so I’ve just been down there to take a look. That’s why I’m a bit late. I’m trying to think how we might get the group down there. I thought we might drive down to the road and I’ve asked permission from the Director to do that. If they’ve come in a mini-bus we could drive down in that. But we could just walk down, I think. They’ve said on the sheet that they’re interested in beavers and muskrats, so this is just great.” Alice and I walk back to the group.
"Girls and boys," the schoolteacher calls out to the children. "This is Alice—Alice and Chris. They'll be your instructors today."

Alice is standing in the walkway between the front doors and the open space, beside the front counter. She is in front of a large framed map of the Nature Centre area. The group is standing in a loose semicircle facing her.

"Are you all good hikers? [response yes] Well, that's good, because I've seen some interesting things down by the river today . . ."

"I went there when I came here on my birthday," a student comments.

"Now, from where you're standing just turn around and look at the map," Alice continues. "Boys and girls, we're right here. There's the parking lot. And this part in blue that looks like a snake, is the river. There's been some beaver activity down by—that? 'Lookout,' right! Down by the Lookout there are some beaver traces. Now over here there's another animal. It ends with 'rat' . . . Right! Musk-rat. We'll be following the trails and they're in red. Now, just before we get started I want to go over hiking and safety when we're outside . . . [she reviews the rules] Now follow me."

Alice leads the group down the stairs, stopping just outside the classroom. The students are standing along the wall by the door to the classroom, facing Alice.

**IN THE CLASSROOM**

"Boys and girls, we're going into the classroom now . . ." Alice tells them.

The students are busy looking at fish in an aquarium exhibit that they can just see around the corner.

"What kind of fish is that?" one student asks.

"That's a long-nose gar," Alice answers. "You can look at those later. Right now we're going into the classroom. You'll see some stuffed animals. They used to be alive but now they're dead. We'll be talking about the beaver and the owl. You can touch the beaver and the coyote but not the owl. Now, I want you to go in and explore for a bit and then I'll ask you how birds and mammals are different."

The students enter the classroom. Alice asks them to put their coats and packs down at the back. They do and then most crowd around the stuffed beaver. They are talking and touching, patting really, the beaver. One parent is photographing the stuffed coyote.

This classroom is an enclosed one. It is approximately fifteen feet square. In the centre of the room is a very large stuffed beaver, mounted as if it is chewing on a log. Against the far wall is a stuffed coyote. To our right as we enter is the stuffed owl, perched on a box. There is also a Velcro board leaning against the wall and a wolverine propped against that. On all the walls there are a variety of colourful posters on nature-related themes. Up higher a few kites are hanging. On the wall to our left as we enter is a large painted mural.
As the children explore, Alice is walking around the room talking to small groups of them. In an aside to me, Alice says with no trace of irony, "This should be fun!"

"What's that?" Alice asks one group. "Did you notice, boys and girls, there are some cuts in the tail? [talking about the beaver] How do you think he got those?" She discusses this with the group for a minute and walks on. Students approach her on occasion. At other times she approaches them to ask questions. Two students stand asking one another questions about the stuffed coyote.

"Boys and girls, about one more minute. Look at something you haven't seen yet."

Alice and the schoolteacher stand talking together and then the schoolteacher sits down on the floor.

"Boys and girls, somebody has the right idea," the schoolteacher calls out, referring to seated children. "Does anyone have gloves that look like this? [holding up a glove]"

The children seat themselves in a semicircle around the box while Alice pushes the stuffed beaver back against the wall. She returns to sit with them.

"I'd like to welcome you to the Nature Centre," Alice begins. "We'll be looking at mammals today and doing some hiking. How many have been here before?" Every child except one raises his/her hand.

"Our class came in the fall for Seeds," the schoolteacher explains. "Mandy is new to the class since then."

"Why are we called the Nature Centre?" Alice asks and then pauses. "I know you're nearby because I drive by that every day on my way to work. . . ."

She goes on to talk with the children about the role of the Nature Centre in animal preservation. Then she picks up a glass case that contains a mounted weasel and holds it on her lap for a minute.

"What is this animal?" she asks. With no answer coming from the student, she picks up a photo of the weasel. A child answers correctly. Alice goes on to talk about beavers and what they eat.

"We'll be going out in just a minute," she tells them. "But first I'd like to show you some pictures of mammals. We'll see all sorts—right from polar bears to the little mice who lived in this hole." She picks up a small model of an animal hole to show the students. Then she walks over and turns on the slide projector, showing several slides. For each slide she asks four or five questions about the animal or bird. Children continue to raise their hands to answer.

During the slide show, one parent slips out into the hall and returns with a cup of coffee. At another point, the teacher moves two boys who are talking to one another away from the screen and closer to her. Alice appears to take no notice of these things and continues, "When we go outside I want you to look for signs of mammals. You might see
tracks or chewed stuff. I want you to keep looking. You've all been good listeners. Now stand up and stretch . . ." Alice stands and then sits down again in front of the Velcro board.

"Let's look quickly at the differences between birds and mammals." As she is talking she picks up stuffed owl and holds it up in front of her. "Let's see if we can discover the differences. Do you see any?" The children move closer when she brings out the owl. As she is talking, Alice brings out printed labels that summarize each correct answer from the children and places it on the Velcro board. Finally she sets down the owl and produces two skulls—one a coyote and the other a beaver skull. The children lean forward to see them.

"You know a lot already!" Alice encourages them. "Now, a lodge—is that where you go skiing?" Everybody laughs. "One more thing before we go outside. Now, I don't want you to touch this and that's why I've put it back here." She brings a stuffed porcupine out from behind her coat. "Now, listen—I'm going to count to three and I want you to listen. One, two, three." She strokes the porcupine's quills in the right direction and they make a rustling sound. The children are quiet. She walks amongst them, bending down with the stuffed porcupine and stroking the quills so they can hear the sound.

"Now, I'm going to pull out a quill—I think there's a loose one right here. I want to show you how the tiniest touch makes the quill stick to my hand. This is loose skin here—between my thumb and first finger—so it won't hurt me." She touches the quill to her hand and it sticks. There is a brief discussion about porcupines. Alice gestures throughout. "Outside, I want you to look for tracks, signs of animals . . ."

Alice tells them it's time to go outside. She moves the stuffed beaver out of the way and asks them to get their coats on.

"I'm just going to get my moose call," she says, leaving the room. She returns wearing a red ski jacket over a sweater and pants with hiking boots.

As they are waiting a student says to Alice, "My neighbour's dog got killed by a porcupine.

"That's unusual," she replies. "Do you mean the dog died from the quills?" Alice talks to the student for a moment and then turns back to the group to say, "We're not coming back here, so don't leave packs or bags. Come out in the hall and line up." The group leaves the classroom and lines up in the hall.

"Just before we go I'd like to do a head count," the teacher says as she counts off the children.

"Does anyone need a quick drink?" Alice asks.

"Or a visit to the washroom?" adds the schoolteacher.

The group visits the washroom before leaving the building.

Alice says to the schoolteacher, "I'm going to head out by the windmill and then take a shortcut to go down by the river. Is that okay?" The teacher responds that it is. "I'd like to go over the safety rules before we go outside."
"Girls and boys, look right at Alice," the schoolteacher calls out.

"The rules make it easier for everyone to enjoy the Nature Centre," Alice begins.

Number one: I want you to walk beside me or behind me. Number two: when we stop, form a semicircle around me. And number three: don't forget that we are all visitors in the forest or the field. They belong to the deer, to the muskrat, to the coyote. Let's respect that and stay on the paths as best we can. Okay, we're going to head out to the muskrat pond."

Alice leads the group outside and along a path through a field and across a road. As she walks half the group run up and walk beside her.

**THE POPULAR PLANTATION**

Alice stops the group by a fork in the path.

"Now, I want you to look at the trees over here. Do you think that is a natural forest?" The children look for a minute and decide that, yes, it is a natural forest. "Look a little more closely. When you look down here, what do you see?" She has them stand so they can see a straight line of trees. "Would the seeds fall in rows by themselves?" The children shake their heads. "No? I don't think so either. These trees have been planted here. Along the path you'll see other trees that have been planted here, too."

One student with a very large leaf in her hand talks to her parent.

"That's a giant one," the parent agrees. "Show that to the teacher." The student takes it up to Alice.

Another parent talks about bringing children here for birthday parties.

At another fork in the path, Alice stops as the group gathers around her.

"Quietly now, very quietly—we're going to walk over to the dock. I want you to go really slowly. No stamping. Anyone with the colour brown? You come along first 'cause you look like a muskrat—then the rest follow."

**THE DOCK**

A little way along path is a large wooden dock jutting out over a small pond. There are reeds and bulrushes along the edges. The students all go to the railings and look out at the pond. Alice stands just behind them.

"How many piles of logs can you see?" she says very softly and then pauses. "I can see one big lodge over there." Alice tells about the life of the muskrats in the pond. Throughout, she stands behind the students, pointing over their heads. The children do not talk except to answer her questions. Their eyes follow as she points things out to them.

"I need to give you some instructions now. I want us to meet at the bottom of the windmills over there. First, anyone with a first name beginning with M for mammal? Okay, off you go." Those children run off down the path. B for beaver? Okay . . . " This continues until all the children are gone.
THE WINDMILLS

Alice joins them at the windmills and talks briefly about what the equipment is doing.

"Boys and girls a long time ago," the schoolteacher adds, "would have gotten their water pumped up by windmills like this one."

"Think of a metre stick," Alice continues. "This goes down 30 metres." As she talks children drift off down the path, looking at things in the field beyond.

"Boys and girls," the schoolteacher calls to them, "listen to the leader here!"

"We’re going to hike down to the river now," Alice tells them and sets off down the path. As she walks she says to the children beside her, "Listen! You can hear a squirrel. I want you to look for cones. In the winter this is the favoured place of the long-eared owl. You might see some owl pellets. Look for them but don’t pick them up. Walk and look for signs. Use your ears, too."

She leads the group on. "Hold on!" she says, stooping down to reach under a pine tree by the path. "Here are some pine cones you might have seen." She pulls the cone apart. "You can see the signs of red squirrels here—look." She holds it out so everyone can see the nibbled edges.

Two students come forward with a stick that is missing some of its bark.

"Now, look at this stick," she says pointing to the two girls. "These are the signs of a rabbit nibbling away the bark."

"No," another student interrupts, "she’s just peeled that away herself!"

Alice laughs. She points out a tunnel under the tree. "Keep looking for signs," she says. "Now stay behind me here. Look up at the holes in the tree here," she says, pointing up. "What might live in there?"

THE RIVER LOOKOUT

The group reaches the riverside and Alice leads them out onto another wooden dock, asking them to sit down so they are sitting on the deck underneath the railing.

"I’m going to say ‘one’ and then I want you to be quiet," she begins. "One." Everyone is very quiet for a moment. Alice continues in a low voice, "I’ve been down here at sunset and heard a big crash. What do you think it was?" She goes on to talk about beavers.

"I thought I saw something move!" a student whispers.

"I thought I heard something, too," the teacher replies.

"Look at the bark across the way," Alice continues. "Does it look like a beaver has been scratching into it? Maybe a bank beaver?"

"I saw a beaver once," a student comments.

"You’re lucky! What time of year was it?" She discusses this with him then continues, "I think we’ll walk along the river. There may be more activity further south."
A parent goes down by the river in order to take a photograph of the group standing and sitting by the rail.

"The school librarian has been having a problem with the beavers taking down all the trees at her cottage," the schoolteacher asks Alice. "It's a real problem. What do you do here?"

"The small trees are okay," Alice replies. "The beavers use all of them. The big ones we put fencing around."

"They have tried that but there are so many beavers that they've already taken the big trees down."

"Beavers are a possible nuisance. In some cases, they do live-trap and move them."

"You stare at the river too long," a parent interrupts, "and it starts to look like something is moving there."

Alice asks the group to follow her further along the riverbank. As they move farther off the regular path, she points out beaver cuttings and a beaver "slide" leading into the river.

**THE BEAVER DAM**

The group walks in single file through the bush on the edge of the riverbank until they reach a small slope by the riverside. Beside it is a beaver dam across the river. Alice points out that there are fresh cuttings on this side of the dam. As she talks, she works her way down a three-foot bank to the dam. Everyone stands single file along the riverbank, facing Alice.

"Remember what this looks like," she calls out to them from on top of the dam, "so you can draw it when you get back to school. I'm going to get one of those new cuttings for you to take back to school." She goes on to talk about the beaver dam and then says it's time to head back. Clambering back up the bank, she leads the group along the riverbank. Parents stop to hoist children up the steeper slopes.

"Look up there," Alice turns to the group. "See the hole in that big tree? If you were a raccoon that would be your mansion! I'm going to go up and bang on that tree and see if anything will come out. You wait here. There might be owls in there." She walks up the slope, picks up a large stick and hits the base of the tree with it. The group waits and watches but no animal emerges. Alice rejoins the group—talking all the while about the habits of owls—and leads the group on. The children shout as they point things out to one another.

"We need a semicircle again," Alice says as she stops and turns to the group. "I'm holding an acorn and a cone in my hands. These are things that the red squirrel really likes so we may see one if we keep watching." She goes on to talk about red squirrels.

Leading the group on, she stops again and says excitedly, "Look through these trees here! Can you see it?! There's a tree that's been chewed almost through by the beavers!"

Turning to the schoolteacher, she asks her, "Do we have time to go down to have a closer look at it?"
"Uh, no. I don't think so," she replies, looking at her watch. "I think we need to be getting back to school."

"Oh, that's too bad," Alice says and turns to the parent with the camera, "Do you have any more shots on the roll? That would be a good one to have." The parent stops to take the picture. Alice turns back to the group, "We didn't see many tracks today but another time you're out, look for the tracks of the beaver trail or a deer foot. The scent they leave behind is one way that animals communicate. We're running behind so—I hate to say goodbye—you've been a great group."

"Do you have any pamphlets for us?" the schoolteacher inquires. "I'll bring them to the bus for you," she tells her and then turns again to the students. "When you come back again you'll see that there have been changes. Lots of work going on. Like you and I, animals get ready for winter. Some won't survive, but that's part of nature. I hope you've learned something today." She pauses for a moment and then adds, "Let me mark on your pamphlet where you saw that tree so you can take a look at it when you come back."

"Thank you!" the teacher concludes. "It's been a great hike. It was so exciting to see the tree and the dam."

The group walks back toward the parking lot and their bus. At the bus, Alice gives the pamphlets to the schoolteacher but not before marking one with the location of the "beaver tree". As she waves goodbye to them, Alice says to me, "She's a good teacher. I've worked with her a lot. And it was nice with the small group. You can do so much more! You know how unique it is to go off the path like that. I did get permission first from the director. He said it was okay to do that."

**Pedagogical Reasoning Behind Alice's Program**

Alice understands the purpose of this tour to be to accentuate "what they've already taken in class" through "hands-on experience" (Int-NCA3, 417–26). However, she believes that her overall goal is to help visitors better understand and appreciate nature (Int-NCA3, 640–61). Alice feels she can sometimes get "overwhelmed with . . . imparting the knowledge" and has to remind herself that what she really wants to teach is the process of exploring and making decisions about the environment (Int-NCA2, 482–6). Her greatest hope is that children coming to the Nature Centre will encounter "some little wee thing that will inspire them" (Int-NCA1, 630–705). She wants to believe that "it's just not two hours and we'll never see them again . . . that it's not an isolated incident and they go away back to
studying leaves in their leaf book and studying trees in their tree book. . . . It's that they can actually have a realistic experience . . . and remember it" (Int-NCA 1, 630–705).

In terms of preparing the tour from the program write-up, Alice has done this program many times before and has a great deal of information on the topic of mammals. Therefore she works from the booking sheet to determine what the schoolteacher wants. In this case, she finds out that the schoolteacher is interested in studying beavers. So Alice restructures the program to focus on that mammal, reviewing both her own materials and what is available for them to see on site.

At this point she considers how the theme may best be represented in terms of the trails and the props she may be able to use. Alice has encountered fresh evidence of beaver activity and decides that it would be more meaningful for the class to see this new cutting than it would be to view the old bank dam that she visited in previous programs (Int-NCA3, 158–82). In making these choices she must also take into account student characteristics; for example, children with special needs might be limited in their access to the trails. Like Dwight, Alice prefers to work outside as much as possible. She finds there is "more of a give-and-take outside" (Int-NCA3, 642–69) where she can be open to the students' interests and help them to appreciate nature as it happens around them. On the inside, she feels she is too much in control because "it's whatever I decide to put up as a picture to talk about, whatever props I've brought in to talk about" (Int-NCA3, 642–69). However, she does consider carefully the props she uses in the classroom and the order in which she will present them. In this tour she moves from skull to photo to the printed name because she feels the real thing has more inherent interest for the children:

Catch their attention at the beginning. "What is that? It's a skull." It's a real skull. Rather than just holding up the name and "this is"—it's a little bit more THEM inquiring. (Int-NCA3, 814–69)

During our interviews, Alice talks little about her conscious selection of modes of teaching, organizing, managing, and arranging. Having worked in the natural environment for most of her life, it may be that she takes her approach for granted. Her teaching style
might be broadly described as “democratic” (Jarvis 1992, 241). For example, it is important to her to “get a feel for how the class works—the dynamic” and then choose those who may seem more hesitant in coming forward, such as the quiet children or, in some cases, the female members of the group (Int-NCA3, 708–96):

They’re a bit more hesitant. So, give them more time. Don’t answer a question—you don’t need an answer right away. And wait. You’ll see the quiet ones and you’ll see the girls—their hands will slowly go up. If you give them a little bit more information and then they’re just a little bit more hesitant but maybe they know the answer. . . . Get a different perspective and that’s what this is about, isn’t it? It really does apply to what we’re doing. (Int-NCA3, 771–96)

We see this as well in her “choosing games,” trying to be fair to all the children. She believes this can be beneficial in many ways—for the child’s self-esteem, for the schoolteacher’s estimation of the child in a new light, and for exploring perspectives that may not emerge ordinarily in the class. Alice offers both the schoolteacher and her students a chance to start a “fresh slate” if the schoolteacher is able to observe them working with another teacher in a new setting (Int-NCA3, 729–47). She hopes that the “different environment will bring out something positive” in the student that the teacher may not have noted before (Int-NCA3, 1010–11).

Other than the concern for physical abilities, Alice does not focus in this tour directly on adaptation to student characteristics. Instead, she adapts and tailors the tour according to the schoolteacher’s needs as a means of reaching the students. Alice feels the schoolteacher knows her students while Alice knows the context and the physical setting of the Nature Centre (Int-NCA1, 67–75). She is looking for a team approach in which the schoolteacher provides direction and discipline as needed (Int-NCA1, 54–65). For example, in their brief conference in the foyer, Alice confirms with this schoolteacher what has been reported on the booking sheet and asks if there is anything else the teacher would like to cover. She encourages her to jump in during the program:

I appreciate . . . input because then it’s coming from her as a teacher, and she knows them, rather than from me—this person that they’ve just met ten minutes ago. They can see it’s tied in and that she’s going to be asking them questions when they get back. (Int-NCA3, 330–415)
Alice feels this relationship not only affords her more respect from the students but is also an assurance that the material will be reinforced in the classroom (Int-NCA1, 67–75).

Although Alice manages her program, there is an ad hoc feel to the instruction. She clearly wants the schoolteacher to be the disciplinarian (Int-NCA1, 54–65), a position the schoolteacher does assert at several points during the program by drawing student attention back to Alice. And Alice does structure the program in her review of the trails and the rules before the group ventures outside. She feels it is essential to review safety rules and basic expectations; otherwise, it can be just a “big field” (Int-NCA3, 504–14). Through this she feels she helps children learn the skills they need to enjoy the outdoors in general. With that may come a change in attitude about what it is possible to do there. “I just hope,” she says, “that some people will grasp just a few little skills [to] whet their curiosity or follow through with books or computers . . . on their own” (Int-NCA2, 257–317).

However, a great deal of the tour is an innovative response to what the trail presents her. As she leads the group through the Windmills area to see muskrat and beaver evidence, she comments upon monarch butterflies, squirrels, pine cones, and owls, among other creatures not recorded. As she says,

Today I was talking about some trees and a toad came by. Well, of course, I’m not going to say, “Oh, leave the toad for now and let’s talk about trees!” (Int-NCA3, 440–93)

By way of illustration, Alice’s decision to take the children off the path to see the beaver cuttings was not taken lightly. She had to check out the area herself first as well as receive permission from the site administrator to take the group there. Furthermore, she has concerns not only about invading the wildlife area and scaring away animals but also about the safety of the children stepping in the poison ivy that grows along these banks. But she believes it is important enough to warrant the extra work (Int-NCA3, 1274–1315).

Like Gord at the Community History Museum, Alice evaluates student understanding through the auspices of the schoolteacher. She asks the schoolteacher to let her know “if I’m on track or not” (Int-NCA1, 54–65). In the final segment, the
schoolteacher steps in to conclude the program because of time constraints. However, Alice also evaluates her own performance and adjusts as she goes along. She mentions drawing at the beaver dam because “it just came to me that it would be fun for them to do” (Int-NCA3, 1219–32). She is also very responsive to changes in the environment, rapidly processing and sharing with the schoolchildren pieces of information she gleans from looking at the forest.

In conclusion, Alice reflects that a longer program might allow for a better mix of activities to appeal to a broader range of learners—from those who like sitting and drawing to those who prefer more active exploration (Int-NCA3, 1219–32). Reviewing her original goals, she feels this is only the beginning of the experience for the children. In her opinion, the schoolteacher “really enjoys nature” and will bring her class back again. Alice finds this kind of support makes it easier for her to conduct programs and to feel that she is helping to make a difference in society (Int-NCA3, 1268–97).

**Summary**

As with Dwight’s program, a key element in Alice’s program is what she is presented with by the environment. Like Dwight, Alice prefers the give-and-take of the outdoor setting and responds quickly and decisively to new things as they are thrust upon her. But this is a lengthy tour account because Alice responds not only to the situation but also to the people participating in her program. What also emerges is her concern for the people in her group, including students, schoolteacher, and parents. Kilbourn (1998) refers to the family of “moral principles” in teaching and defines them as emphasizing “the question of how children are to be treated rather than the question of how to help them learn” (p. 44). This expresses itself in Alice’s conviction that children should be treated “fairly” and should be given “reasons” for what they do. For example, Alice finds it difficult to explain death to the younger students but feels it is important for them to know the reasons behind things, even at a young age. Although not an issue with this group, she has been surprised before
when asked by students about the stuffed mammals: "But what about his soul?" (Int-NCA3, 589–97)

However, Alice's concern with what is "right" to do in this situation and with these children extends beyond moral issues and begins to address what Van Manen (1991a) terms the "pedagogical moment". I will continue this discussion in the next section.

CASE ANALYSIS

Again many issues having to do with the commonplaces of teaching emerge from these program accounts. However, as before, I postpone discussion of these issues until Chapters Nine and Ten, where I will address them as they occur amongst all three cases in the study. In this case analysis I focus instead on aesthetic qualities of the case that emerged from my analysis of the data. To review briefly, at the conclusion of the Community History Museum case I considered the quality of owntime as a function of the interpreters' perception of museum teaching. At the conclusion of the Country Art Gallery case the aesthetic of performance in museum teaching was examined, with emphasis on liking and the interpersonal relationship between teacher and learner. In this chapter I focus on the qualities of passion and pedagogical tact.

Passion and Pedagogical Tact

At first glance, the two programs featured in this chapter seem radically different. I refer in particular to the observable forms of teaching recorded in my field notes and presented here. Dwight's program is systematic, organized, and structured with a clear beginning, middle, and end. He makes only five clear stops during the course of the two hours. The program is orderly and the results are measurable. On the other hand, Alice works from an underlying structure but adapts it first to the needs of the schoolteacher and second to what the environment presents. She makes at least nine stops. The program that emerges is
somewhat disorderly. Yet there is a commonality between the two that, I argue, has to do with the qualities of passion, of authenticity, of sincerity, of working from and teaching what they truly believe.

This sense of passion for the subject and the learners is perhaps implicit in the work of Shulman (1987), Eisner (1983, 1985, 1991, 1994), and others, but it is considered an essential ingredient in the field of interpretation within which Alice and Dwight work. Beck and Cable (1998) contend that passion is one of the fifteen “guiding principles” for interpretation in the twenty-first century. As they write:

Through our passion for the resources we interpret we may bring out similar passions in those we interpret to. To draw visitors into a full appreciation of the interpretive setting, the interpreter displays an affinity for the resource and a respect for humanity. We introduce the visitor to something we love, not something we own. Interpreters may also convey their passion by hinting that what we do isn’t a job or an occupation, but rather a way of life. (p. 193)

Questions of what is “right” to do in a certain situation and with certain children address what Van Manen (1991a) terms the “pedagogical moment”. He argues that “in all our interactions with children, we are constantly involved, whether we like it or not, in distinguishing between what is good and what is not good for them” (p. xii). The “pedagogical moment is embedded in the situation where something pedagogical is expected of us and in which we subsequently are oriented to do that which is good for the child” (p. 508). Tact, according to Van Manen, is the sentient awareness of our instant response as a whole person to unexpected or unpredictable situations (Van Manen 1991b, 122). Pedagogical tact is this same sensitivity as applied by the teacher to the student(s) (p. 125). Kilbourn’s (1998) concept of situation, which I discussed in Chapter Eight, is also helpful here.

However, as emerges from the data, the teacher-participant’s sense of what is tactful is sometimes at odds with what is expected to happen in the program. In many ways this is the same aesthetic question of structure versus chaos. This is evident at several points in the Nature Centre programs of Alice and Dwight. Pedagogical tact is outer-
directed and improvisational (Van Manen 1991b, 129–147) but it relies for its development on the understanding that the teacher knows how and what to do, and does it (p. 146). Teaching must be an "authentic" (p. 225) representation of what the teacher knows. As Van Manen writes,

A science teacher is more than just a person who happens to teach science. A real science teacher is a person who thinks science, who wonders about the nature of science and the science of nature—a real science teacher is a person who embodies science, who lives science, who in a strong sense is science. (p. 121)

LaPage (1998) asserts that "interpretation, by definition, departs from the professional and goes deeply into the realm of the personal". Like many natural interpreters, the teaching practice of Alice and Dwight seems to stem from their own lives (Zuefle 1994). As Alice says, whatever you loved doing as a child, if you follow through and do it as an adult, then you'll be happy (Int-NCA1, 145–47). Dwight echoes this: "It's an extension of what I LIKE to do and what I thought was worthwhile doing" (Int-NCD2, 405–6). Natural interpreters like Alice and Dwight see themselves as "both teachers and artists" whose "charge is to excite those hearts and souls, and to make the natural and cultural world relevant to all people on this planet" (Basman 1998).

As I proceed with presentation of the data and an analysis of the pedagogical reasoning of teacher-participants certain themes emerge having to do with authority, authenticity, and their interrelationships with understandings of teaching and learning. In Part III I will address further what teacher-participants know, how they conceptualize teaching, and how they learn to teach in the museum, gallery and nature centre.
PART III

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

In this segment of the paper, I focus on answering the remaining questions posed in Chapter Two:

- What do museum teachers know?
- How do museum teachers conceptualize teaching in the museum?
- How do museum teachers believe they learn to teach in the museum, gallery, or nature centre?

Shulman (1987) hypothesizes that the sources of a teacher’s knowledge base may be found in four main areas: (1) scholarship in content disciplines, (2) educational materials and structures, (3) formal educational scholarship, and (4) the wisdom of practice. I will elaborate on each of these categories below. In Shulman’s estimation, understandings in each of these categories form the principles that guide the practices of able teachers (p. 11). It is important to acknowledge that these categories do not exist independently of one another (Grossman 1990; Hillocks 1999). For example, a teacher’s formal knowledge of learning and learners influences decisions about materials and the goals of teaching.

In Part III I undertake a cross-case analysis of the knowledge bases of the eight teacher-participants whom I introduced in Chapter Four and whose tours/programs I explored in Chapters Five, Six, and Seven. Beginning in Chapter Eight, I explore scholarship in content disciplines (subject) and educational materials and structures (site). In Chapter Nine I continue my analysis of the remaining two knowledge bases: formal
educational scholarship (learners and learning) and the wisdom of practice (teachers and teaching). My analysis is not intended to judge the effectiveness of these museum teachers. Rather, I am interested in what sense they themselves make of the museum as a place within which to teach, and the lenses they utilize to do that.

I conclude in Chapter Ten with a discussion of the implications of the study for both the practice of teaching in museums, galleries, and nature centres as well as for further research in the field.
CHAPTER EIGHT

TEACHER-PARTICIPANTS’ CONCEPTIONS OF SUBJECT AND SITE IN THE MUSEUM, GALLERY, AND NATURE CENTRE

SCHOLARSHIP IN CONTENT DISCIPLINES

In Chapter One I posed two questions related to subject matter:

- By seeking to identify themselves as educators first and subject-matter specialists second, have museum educators discounted the importance of understanding the different patterns and structures of knowledge that underpin the museum milieu?

- Do museum teachers share the concept of “museum literacy”? Do they use it in their work?

In this section I explore the different ways in which the eight teacher-participants in my study understand and approach the discipline-base not only of the institution but also of museum studies.

Shulman (1987) proposes that there are two foundations for the knowledge of scholarship in content disciplines. First, the teacher must know the accumulated literature and studies in the content area together with the critical literature. Second, she or he must also know the philosophical scholarship on the nature of knowledge in these fields. If teaching is to be seen as a “learned profession,” Shulman argues, it is the responsibility of the teacher to know not only content but also the structures of the subject matter, and its
principles of conceptual organization and of inquiry. The teacher must know the important ideas and skills in the domain and how new ideas are added and deficient ones dropped. Ultimately, he or she must know "how truth is determined" within that discipline (p. 9).

Three elements are critical to a disciplinary understanding: content knowledge (factual knowledge, organizing principles, central concepts), substantive knowledge (explanatory frameworks or paradigms that are used both to guide inquiry in the field and to make sense of it), and syntactic knowledge (ways in which new knowledge is brought into the field) (Schwab 1964; Grossman et al. 1989). This is important for teaching if one agrees with Hillocks (1999) that the scholarly conception of a subject matter carries with it an inherent conception of its pedagogy (p. ix). For example, a science teacher may see as the goal of her teaching the acquisition of vocabulary needed for further scientific study, or she may consider it to be the understanding of the processes of scientific inquiry. Less experienced teachers may lack the managerial skills by which to implement such principles successfully but their beliefs about the goals for their teaching nevertheless form the conceptual map for their instructional decision-making (Grossman 1990, 86). Different disciplines offer different ways of knowing, which in turn influence ways of teaching.

It has been fashionable to disparage discipline-based education in museums. In part this may be because contemporary museum education in American museums is heavily influenced by the work of John Dewey (Stapp 1984; Roschelle 1995; Roberts 1997). Dewey theorized that personal experience was a major factor in learning. As he noted in 1938, "Anything which can be called a study, whether arithmetic, history, geography, or one of the natural sciences, must be derived from materials which at the outset fall within the scope of ordinary life-experiences" (Dewey 1963, 73). Many modern museum exhibits and programs rely heavily on this notion of experience-based learning. However, Dewey further explained that, by itself, experience had the potential to be non-educative or even mis-educative (p.25). As Gardner (1999) notes with regard to history, childhood experiences tend to form internal representations that depict historical events in terms of a
simplistic good/bad dichotomy like that seen in a *Star Wars* film. Other misconceptions about history have to do with “presentism”, or the tendency to believe that all times are like our own, and “atemporality”, or the inability to differentiate events of an earlier time from our own (p. 122). Borun (1989) has noted similarly “naive notions” in the public understanding of science. Such misconceptions, based as they are upon personal experience, can be extremely robust and, therefore, difficult to alter.

Accordingly, as important as having the experience is what one does with it. Dewey writes, “... there is no intellectual growth without some reconstruction, some remaking, of impulses and desires in the form in which they first show themselves” (Dewey 1963, 64). Often overlooked by contemporary museum educators is Dewey’s conjecture that the next step after experience is the “progressive development of what is already experienced into a fuller and richer and also more organized form, a form that gradually approximates that in which subject-matter is presented to the skilled, mature person” (p. 73). According to Gardner (1994), disciplines like history, literature and the sciences, offer “the most sophisticated ways yet developed for thinking about and investigating issues that have long fascinated and perplexed thoughtful individuals” (Gardner and Boix-Mansilla 1994, 16).

Knowledge of different disciplines offers different ways of knowing our world:

Disciplines lend themselves to different kinds of roles and performances. To read texts critically, in the manner of a historian, is a quite different matter than to design a crucial experiment and analyze data relevant to competing models of an infectious process. Different disciplines call on different analytic styles, approaches to problem-solving and findings, temperaments, and intelligences. (p. 18)

In terms of helping people to acquire this discipline-based understanding, Gardner (1999) maintains a museum has the potential to be a “suggestive institution” (p. 126). This means that not only may the learner’s experiences in a museum serve to reveal the inadequacies of his or her current conceptions about the discipline but also the museum’s exhibits may offer new habits and concepts to replace the old ways of thinking. This “apprenticeship” in thinking is immeasurably assisted, Gardner argues, by the presence of
museum teachers, or others like them, who are able to offer "spirited conversation, proper guidance and scaffolding" so that more appropriate theories may arise (p. 127).

However, in order to guide others in the processes of doing a discipline, it is not enough for the museum teacher to know the content of the discipline. The museum teacher's manner also imparts to the learner the nature of the discipline under study. As Peters (1973) says, "To learn [a discipline] is not just to learn facts and to understand theories; it is also to learn to participate in a public form of life governed by such principles of procedure" (p. 25). Students may be introduced to disciplines by observing teachers or experts who embody the practices of the discipline, by looking at and creating their own exhibitions of the wisdom of the discipline, or by encountering the concepts, theories, and methods of the discipline and putting them into practice (Gardner and Boix-Mansilla 1994).

Thinking about docents, interpreters, or gallery educators as "masters" in a master/apprentice relationship presupposes that they are authorities on the subject in question. Peters (1969) discusses the question of authority and education in some detail and concludes authority appeals to an impersonal, normative order or value system that regulates behaviour because people accept it (p. 239). Unlike power, Peters argues, authority does not subject others to its will but rather appeals to their reason (p. 240). However, there are two senses of authority: one can be in authority, and one can be an authority. Like Gardner (1999), Peters contends that teaching is the "passing on of knowledge, skills, and modes of conduct in such a way that the learner is brought to understand and evaluate the underlying rationale for what is presented to him" (Peters 1969, 261). Schoolteachers are given authority in both senses of the word because they are put in authority to do a certain job for the community and to maintain social control in the school while doing it. Schoolteachers must also be authorities on some aspect of the culture that is important to the community they serve (p. 240). These two senses of authority coalesce when the teacher is in authority because he or she has established himself or herself as an authority (p. 253).
To establish and maintain the sense of being an authority, Peters reasons, the teacher behaves as someone who is an authority on something. He or she feels “called” (p. 259) to teach this subject and sees it as an enterprise of the human spirit rather than “just ... transient titillation” (p. 259). As Peters writes,

> Behind all spheres of knowledge and skill stands the notion that there is a right and a wrong way of doing things, that some things are true and others false, and that it matters desperately what is done or said. A sense of curiosity and wonderment must be conveyed about questions which give the activity its point, together with a passion for precision in accepting or rejecting answers to them. In other words, what is intrinsic to the activities and forms of awareness must be vividly intimated without arrogance. (p. 259)

Rituals associated with teaching, like the cap and gown of the traditional professor, serve to mark this authority, provide a link with the past, and show certain values (p. 260). They are “extrinsic aids,” says Peters, that help to develop “intrinsic motivation” for the learner to identify with the values of the teacher (p. 260). This transformation of the learner is the teacher’s aim (p. 260), an aim that is always complicated in the classroom by the concurrent necessity of preserving order as a condition of performance on the part of the teacher (p. 264).

Gardner’s (1999) notion of the museum as a “suggestive institution” in which museum teachers provide “spirited conversation, proper guidance and scaffolding” (p. 127) implies the existence of a sense of being an authority on the part of the museum teacher. Rice (1994) contends that museum educators are “expert” on visitors’ ways of knowing, communication skills, and the collections (p. 18). However Peters (1969) argues that such thinking is typical of an American approach to teaching where “the demand is that [teachers] should be experts on means rather than authorities on ends” (p. 254). To add to the question posed at the beginning of this section then, does the museum teacher consider himself or herself to be an authority, in authority? If so, in what ways?

In the following section I explore the subject-matter understandings of the teacher-participants in this study and the ways in which they perceive these principles to influence their teaching within the museum, gallery, or park setting.
The Country Art Gallery

The Visual Arts

It is important to acknowledge the extent to which the gallery, museum, or nature centre influences the frame or “clustered set of standard expectations” through which the teacher-participants “organize not only their knowledge of the world but their behaviour in it” (Barnes 1992, 16). The Country Art Gallery locates itself within one scholarly discipline, that of the visual arts, as exemplified by the discipline-based conceptual map (Getty Center 1985, 13–19), and this frames the way in which docents and educators will approach their teaching. To review briefly, Phenix (1964) argues that meaning in this realm is made from a subjective “immediate attentive perception of individual objects” (p. 144). One achieves this by working to comprehend not only the finished product, but also the means by which it was created. Thus the materials and techniques of the artist—the qualities of the materials—are the essence of the work of art (p. 155). The historical generalizations of art history only help guide the viewer to a better direct perception of the individual works (p. 161).

This is reflected in the work of Joan, who, although she was trained in economics and adult education, has incorporated the ways of knowing in the visual arts into her practice. Joan sees the student visitors as their own interpreters of meaning, aided in this by an understanding of artistic principles and processes, with an end view of having an “art experience” (Int-AGJ1, 246).

I want the KIDS to interpret. I don’t want to be doing the interpreting. . . . . . . I’m not interpreting it TO them, I’m interpreting it for me. And I want to see them interpret it for THEM. (Int-AGJ2, 438–43)

For her, the methods of inquiry in the visual arts are the unifying element of the discipline. While she believes that a reasonable store of art information gives her the confidence to teach others, it is the “tools of knowledge” that children need to learn about art:
... that they can look at a painting and they can see that there are brush strokes, that an artist has physically made this. Even if they can’t see—I guess what I’d LOVE to be able to do is be able to think in terms of shapes and lines and colours so that even if they see an abstract painting it’s not totally overwhelming. “Well, what is it?” “Well, it’s shapes, it’s colour, it’s a painting!” ... And it’s the process that makes it. (Int-AGJ2, 1805–20)

Yet, at the same time, Joan trades a tour on watercolours to another gallery educator whom she feels is more familiar with the technique and can, therefore, offer a better tour (FN-AGJ1, 3–7). Similarly, she respects those schoolteachers who have come to the Country Art Gallery with their classes because of their love for the paintings (Int-AGJ2, 2328–48). As she sees it, the class also affords the schoolteacher respect because of his or her genuine enthusiasm for the subject matter and a sort of “halo effect” extends to the tour. On the other hand, she believes that “if the teacher couldn’t care less [about the art] then you just start with strikes against you” (Int-AGJ2, 2328–48).

Joan’s knowledge of the visual arts appears limited to content—the factual knowledge, organizing principles, and central concepts of the discipline. Substantive and syntactic knowledge is not part of her way of thinking in the visual arts. For example, she does not refer to or question methods of inquiry or the ways in which new information is introduced to the field. She feels it helps to be an artist and acquainted with the processes of art, but that art knowledge can be acquired on the job. Further to this, she thinks the former emphasis by the gallery on an academic background was mistaken:

And I think it’s darn well good that they recognized that an art degree isn’t the be-all and end-all. You want SOME people to have it but that isn’t necessary for everybody. It shouldn’t be required. ... Because what we do is an art experience, I think, and you can learn that without an art degree. ... Part of the problem has been they hire the wrong people on as educators. They hire many young women who come out—they get their degree in art history; some have fine art but more art history. Then they go do a teaching degree and they can’t get a job. So they come and work for us for three months. ... There’s really no point in hiring these fresh-out-of-university kids. They’re bright kids, they’re nice to have around, but they just get trained and they’re gone. ... So, it’s just constant turnover. They really need to focus on middle-aged women. I mean, you hate to say that, but when you get right down to it [pause] that’s who you’re going to get the most time out of. (Int-AGJ1, 241–305)

Because of this, she is happy to work within the structure provided for her. She notes,
That's how I was taught. Some people veer off, that but I find everything works better if I don't... And that's been done like that for a reason and I'm happy to work with that... (Int-AGJ2, 1730-50)

However, both Bern and Walt approach the visual arts from quite different, albeit discipline-based, perspectives that in turn affect their teaching. Bern, with a background in political science, is interested not in the subjective, individual response to art, but in the social "interaction among persons, each of whom takes account of others as individuals with attitudes and expectations toward himself" (Phenix 1964, 129). As Bern says,

I'm interested in people—where are they from, where they're coming from in terms of their thinking, in terms of their understanding of art, in terms of the interest that they show... That's important... And then, yes, I learn also a little bit about myself—how tolerant I am, you know, with people. Can I handle that? You learn a lot about yourself. (Int-AGB2, 655-84)

For Bern, knowledge of art equals "power, enlightenment" (Int-AGB2, 649 Text Insert) that affords one the kind of "authority" described by Peters (1969) at the beginning of this chapter. As such, he sees visitors as seekers of power and influence:

At a social gathering, members or a member of your group may look very enlightened and become the envy of the others, by displaying some or such intimate understanding of ART (It is a human trait to want to SHINE, SHOW-OFF, for some to boost ego, others to make a point) but helping them along the way in whatever small measure, to me, is worthwhile. You have no control over what they do with that knowledge. Your duty is to see that the knowledge is correct. (Int-AGB2, 649 text insert)

As a docent, Bern "must be prepared to have something to share, so that visitors can go home convinced that it was a meaningful visit" (Bern's response to Int-AGB1, 16-20). Visitors agree to follow and listen to him for the duration of the tour, they allow him to be their leader, because he has done his homework and is, therefore, able to gain their confidence. He prepares afresh for each tour:

Even if I've gone through that tour a THOUSAND times... I recap, rethink BEFORE I get there so that I do not waste their time... I am not doing myself an injustice. I do not go and play games. I go there to see that they gain and I can help them. (Int-AGB2, 330-41)

Although Walt does not often refer to the discipline of the visual arts, nevertheless, for him "the subject matters... the person who put that together had one focus and I think
... that is then for the individual to take that, to cover those things that are there in whatever way they can best do it, as long as they're all covered in whatever way" (Int-AGW2a, 298-336). Walt has been closely affiliated with science education throughout his teaching career in both formal and nonformal settings, although his undergraduate study was history. It is this discipline base that I believe he brings to his teaching. As Walt says:

I also build my science into my art. . . . in my interview to see if I was going to be accepted as a volunteer [at the Country Art Gallery], they asked, "Are you backing out of science? Why?" And I said, "My God, [the artists] worked in the out-of-doors. I ran an outdoor ed. centre. They looked at the beauty of nature, they did studies of colour, texture — you do all that in science. Where is the difference?" All the things, it's all the same thing. . . . Every job I've had I've been looking at the same things except you just adapt in a different way to each one of them. (Int-AGW2a, 206-18)

Walt bases his understanding upon a scientific way of knowing. Phenix (1964) hypothesizes that the natural and social sciences are concerned with the material truth expressed in the general laws and theories of the actual world (p. 26). While the goal in this realm of meaning is the formulation and testing of general laws, with the ultimate aim being the discovery of truth, generalizations come first and are then tested. In contrast to the popular view that generalizations arise from experimentation, the "imaginative construction" comes first and is critical to the undertaking of empirical study (p. 96-97). In terms of subject matter, "to know a science is to be able to formulate valid general descriptions of matters of fact" (p. 95). Therefore, knowledge in science is of the actual world, or the world as it appears to be through the senses. The work of the scientist is to bring "some order and intelligibility out of what appears to be a miscellaneous and unrelated profusion of phenomena" (p. 104).

We see this in Walt's work in the way that he values and promotes curiosity as "learning's most valuable component" (FN-AGW3, 145). In science (and in Walt's way of knowing art) curiosity leads to both problem setting and problem solving. But there is also the more mystical element of the "sense of wonder" that leads to the imaginative construction of the hypothesis in science. He feels that his philosophy of teaching is greatly influenced by the work of Rachel Carson (Int-AGW1). In her book The Sense of Wonder
Carson talks about the need to preserve the sense of awe and wonder, “a recognition of something beyond the boundaries of human existence,” in order to maintain the “inner contentment” and “excitement in living” of childhood.

Walt focuses on the actual works of art as they appear to him and to his audience rather than on the experience of looking at the art. Thus he compares and contrasts two works of art by “viewing” them, reading more about them, and then “trying to bring those things together—once” (Int-AGW2, 118-31). In the exhibit galleries he looks for form and pattern to make sense of the curator’s intent, but is perplexed when “there doesn’t seem to be any rhyme or reason to any of it” (Int-AGW2b, 596-602). He is frustrated in his attempt to bring “some order and intelligibility out of what appears to be a miscellaneous and unrelated profusion of phenomena” (Phenix 1964, 104) because he does not have the substantive and syntactic knowledge of art that he does in science. He lacks the disciplinary confidence by which to actively challenge the organization of content by the curator. And so he simply avoids the space, just as a schoolteacher might avoid an element of the curriculum of which he or she did not feel certain (Wilson and Wineburg 1988; Grossman 1990, 12). As Walt says about his tour, usually he prefers to not “go near [Gallery 8] at all” (Int-AGW2B, 767).

MUSEOLOGY IN THE COUNTRY ART GALLERY

Docents/educator rarely refer to museological subject matter beyond “content” concerns. The Country Art Gallery does identify itself as a museum and dedicates a portion of the school tour to “museum literacy,” where the basic rules of conduct are outlined (e.g., stand back from the art, no gum chewing, etc.). Yet this stops far short of what Stapp (1984) defined as museum literacy, which is “genuine and full visitor access to the museum by virtue of mastery of the language of museum objects and familiarity with the museum as an institution” (p. 3). And beyond that, a person with “true literacy” is operating at “a high level of proficiency, autonomously exercising his or her critical faculties” (p. 3).
Part of the confusion may arise from a tendency in art museums to conflate the disciplines of visual arts and museology. As Burcaw (1975) noted, “people involved in the arts and in art museums frequently refer to art museums simply as ‘museums’, as though other kinds of museums do not exist” (footnote, p.70). For example, Williams (1984c), then Director of Education for the Denver Art Museum, argues that museum literacy is essentially equivalent to making meaning within the visual arts:

To call for museum literacy ... is to call for a theory of instruction focused on teaching visitors how to have personally significant experiences with objects. This prescription stems from the nature of museums and the definition of teaching: to teach is to show someone how to do something and in museums that something is “having a personally significant experience with an object.” (p. 10)

When cast within the framework of the Country Art Gallery, such understandings may help to explain the lack of direct museological reference in observations and interviews with Joan, Walt, and Bern. For those who work in the art museum, the museum is simply another manifestation of the visual arts. “Museology” is seen to be the study of exhibition as a visual art (Preziosi 1995) and exhibition development is a scholarly medium (Roberts 1997, 76). “Museography” is the equivalent of art history, maintains Preziosi (1995). Thus “art history provides the common language of art museums and is the only major point of reference in the organization and planning of an art museum’s central programs ...” (Mühlberger 1985, 97). Such an understanding raises questions as to the direct applicability of art museum literacy to other settings. For example, does learning to use the art museum necessarily imply mastery of the history museum? In the same way, does learning to teach in the art museum necessarily imply mastery of teaching in the history museum or the nature centre?
The Community History Museum

History

The Community History Museum represents the study of history at a multifaceted site where "history, art and culture come alive" through the media of an archives, an art gallery, and the museum itself. In a far-ranging study of American history museums, a history museum was defined simply as an institution that displays historical artifacts, reproductions, or representations of artifacts, in the formal effort to teach about the past (Leon and Rosenzweig 1989, xiv). This broad definition suits the Community History Museum which, in point of fact, is defined only as a "community museum" in the provincial museum association's guidebook. To my knowledge, there is nothing like discipline-based history education in Canadian history museums that is comparable to "discipline-based arts education" (Getty Center 1985). The goals and outlines of the tours outlined in this study (Time Trekkers, Titanic) focus on the content and how-to of history and archaeology rather than on the principles of discipline-based conceptual organization and inquiry. As well, the site's exhibits are developed by a curator with a background in art history. In this context, it may be unfair to categorize the discipline base of the Community History Museum as history when it may be more truly an interdisciplinary amalgam. But it is even more important in an interdisciplinary setting to master and integrate the component disciplines in order to answer "essential" questions (Gardner and Boix-Mansilla 1994, 17). If not the only discipline — geography, political science, psychology, anthropology, sociology, and economics as components of "social studies" might be others in consideration (Wilson and Wineburg 1988) — history is certainly one of the disciplines that comprise the subject matter of the community museum.

According to Phenix, the aim of history is to understand "from the inside" (Phenix 1964, 239) decisions that people made in the past. "Historical understanding is personal
insight expressed in ordinary language, informed by scientific knowledge, transformed by esthetic imagination, and infused by moral consciousness” (p. 240). Because of this, each meaning is unique. It is not possible to develop general principles or laws in history. The historian’s task is to describe, order, and interpret the human events of the past. But the event, happening, or episode is simply a convenient unit of historical inquiry rather than a fact or a truth. Historians must make their own events out of the evidence that is available to them, including eyewitness accounts, documents, monuments, artifacts, and the remains of the past in the present world. An event is “something that happened once upon a time” (p.236)—a story—because the historian uses imagination in the telling and aims through the story to achieve a level of self-understanding, as in the arts. And, as in the sciences, this interpretation is an imaginative construction from which arises an historical hypothesis. The final object of knowledge is called a fact rather than a perception or a generalization. The historian must recognize that it is not possible to frame the whole truth. Instead, he or she must settle for partial truths, which are ever subject to validation through the process of progressive criticism and the improvement of historical knowledge over time. Thus sense-making in history becomes finding the “best possible explanation of the present in terms of the past” (p. 235–42).

The Community History Museum focuses staff training on the acquisition of the “facts” of history through the week-long orientation session noted in Chapter Four, in addition to offering what interpreters describe as “binders and binders” of information (Int-HM12, 55; Int-HM1, 751–64). This approach leaves novice interpreters to assimilate and accommodate on their own the substantive and syntactic knowledge of history as a discipline. To do this, those without university-level training in the field tend to utilize their own disciplinary frames (Grossman et al. 1989, 30), bearing in mind that people also bring their own temperaments and intelligences to any study of a discipline (Gardner and Boix-Mansilla 1994, 18).
Helen, for example, brings a science understanding to her work at the history museum from her background in psychology and physical anthropology. This manifests itself particularly in her concept of the "facts". Before the Titanic exhibit opened, she contributed by researching "unusual facts that could be put into the exhibit...interesting little titbits" (Int-HMH3, 625-29). Helen has been given facts and seeks to share those that will make her point (HMM3, 715-45). Overall, she tries to give visitors "as much information as possible on the topic" (Int-HMH2, 27-64). As Helen says, with a laugh,

I was trying to give them something different, some new information. I had to. I was trying to give them some new info but they didn't seem to WANT it... I was trying to give them something they didn't already know but they seemed to know so much already. I wanted to give them something different. (Int-HMH3, 979-88)

She does not seem to view facts from the historical perspective as imaginative constructions from which arises an historical hypothesis (Phenix 1964, 235-42). This makes her less sure of herself both in terms of history as well as in terms of her own authority. Helen notes,

I don't think of myself as an expert. I teach what I know but I can't know everything. I certainly expect the [school] teacher to be there and to be in control of the class. (Int-HMH3, 498-99)

Tellingly, on adult tours, where there is no schoolteacher in authority, Helen chooses instead to share authority with the adult participants by entering into a dialogue with them. If she doesn't do this, her experience has been that adults simply leave the tour. As she relates, "You just notice your audience drifting away" (Int-HMH3, 963)

Similarly, the goal of Jennifer's teaching is to have the students "get some facts" (FN-HMJ1:386-88). But in her case, it is because she believes they need an historical perspective from which to understand the events of the present (FN-HMJ1, 386-88). For Jennifer, worksheets structure the acquisition of evidence from labels and through artifacts which she can then use to work with students to share "stories" of the past (Int-HMJ2, 1573-97). History for her is grounded in the firsthand experiences of family and community which makes history "come alive" and hold relevance for the individual (Int-
Artifacts are important to this end, but they need to be “hands-on” and placed in contextual displays in order that people may see and use them. Yet she sees the need for both information and stories as paradoxical for her teaching. She does not equate what she does with historical interpretation (Int-HM1, 955):

I think there’s the idea sometimes when [the students] come into a museum—[whispers] “I know it’s going to be boring.” . . . I often wonder, when the kids are there, what’s more important? Is it more important to teach them something—to have them have their heads filled with all this information? Or is it more important for them to have a positive experience at this museum—so that they will want to come back . . . and they won’t get turned off? Because there are times when if you have a group and you’re constantly yelling at them and telling them to do this—“You haven’t read that! Go back and read that label!”—you’re not going to have them reading that information AND they’re going to be turned off from their experience AND they won’t come back. (Int-HM1, 925-38)

Instead, Jennifer’s perspective seems derived from her training in social work, which combines the meaning-making of the social sciences with personal knowledge (Phenix 1964, 273). Of personal knowledge, Phenix comments:

. . . personal knowledge is not developed through formal instruction. It is a consequence of the basic fact of human association, beginning with the family and extending in ever-widening circles to relationships in community, occupational life, and even people in other nations and cultures. (p.196)

Out of her own practice, Jennifer has developed an historical way of knowing that is not unlike that described by Phenix at the beginning of this section. However, without an analytical framework to ground her understanding, she is not able to deliberately use what is for her an innate or intuitive knowledge of history to help students undertake the process of interpreting the past for themselves.

On the other hand, Gord comes to his teaching with a theoretical grounding in the field of history acquired through undergraduate studies in the discipline. His aim is to get students interested in reading and writing history because he believes that “historical literacy” contributes to the development of the whole person (Int-HMG1, 562-96). Drake (1997) defines historical literacy as the knowledge of historical facts, themes, and ideas; the ability to analyze, evaluate, and synthesize historical evidence; and the ability to
communicate one’s historical knowledge and reasoning to others. Gord sees himself accomplishing this end by using the Socratic method of teaching, which, through informed questions, encourages the student first to frame historical facts and ideas and then to reason with them. Furthermore, the wealth of artifacts available in a museum allows students firsthand access to historical evidence. Gord deliberately draws attention to artifacts and architectural elements because they are for him a key element of the museum experience. Visitors, he believes, will construct their own links to the artifact because it is a relic of everyday life in the past. In Gord’s view such connections promote a sense of shared humanity with historical figures (Int-HMG2, 318–74). In Gord’s own words:

... "This stuff is real. This stuff is real." ... history is history and I don’t think you create all these warm, fuzzy feelings by running away from the past or what happened. You’ve got to study the past. You’ve got to understand the past. And I think the museum is an excellent place to do this. ... the museum is a WEALTH of this kind of stuff and I think it’s important, too, for us to make sure that we’ve got plenty of repros or some artifacts that maybe are duplicates ... so the kids can handle them and play with them and touch and see ... I think the tactile part of education is just as important as the visual. Kids need to be able to hold things and see things. ... There’s a link there.

And, I think every kid’s got a link with the past. They’ve brought something with them when they came to this country, or if they were born and raised here, they’ve got something that’s a link to the past. So I think it helps them appreciate their OWN links to the past. ... I think this creates humanity. In other words, we’re not just automatons going through this world. ...

And what are the qualities which make us human? Education is one of them. Dare I say, perhaps history is one of the MOST important [chuckles]. You know, if I didn’t feel that way I wouldn’t have been a history teacher. (Int-HMG2, 318–74)

For teachers accomplished in their discipline, the goal of their teaching is as much process as product (Grossman et al. 1989). This is clearly the case with Gord’s understanding of history. Yet the tour he conducts in Chapter Five does not focus on the processes of history-making. Instead, the introduction of museology as a second subject matter seems to impede the flow of his teaching.
MUSEOLOGY IN THE COMMUNITY HISTORY MUSEUM

In speaking of museums, Gord seems sure, as do Helen and Jennifer, that "artifacts" and "experience" are the content of the discipline (Int-HMH2, 27-64; FN-HMJ4, 379). This is comparable to what other educators in history museums have said: "[W]e are . . . abstracting from the artifact to the artifice: a construction or reconstruction of the past" (Yellis 1984, 14). All three interpreters want visitors to enjoy themselves and return on their own. But there is little certainty about how to do this, other than by making sure students have a good time at the museum. There is no mention of museum literacy per se at the Community History Museum.

The Nature Centre

SCIENCE

At the beginning of my research, the Education Coordinator of the Nature Centre told me that her work was especially influenced by the book Philosophy of Natural Science (Hempel 1966). However, it was only much later that I read the book and recognized its place in Phenix's empirical realm of meaning, as described in my discussion of Walt's understandings (the natural sciences being physics, chemistry, biology, and their border disciplines). I had expected that the Education Coordinator's understandings would be framed by the rubric of environmental studies, a more holistic approach to the physical, social, and psychological milieu in which we exist, which affects us and is in turn affected by us. Environmental literacy has been defined as the "capacity to perceive and interpret the relative health of environmental systems and take appropriate action to maintain, restore, or improve the health of those systems" (Disinger and Roth 1992, 1). While the Education Coordinator values a knowledge of environmental issues, she is wary of hiring someone who might be "too idealistic." This may represent the confrontation of two realms of
meaning: the **scientific**, in which the goal is to bring "some order and intelligibility out of what appears to be a miscellaneous and unrelated profusion of phenomena" (Phenix 1964, 104), with the **environmental** in which the goal is "appropriate action."

At the same time, however, Nature Centre brochures for both school and public visits advertise a wide range of environmental education programs in the fields of social studies, history, geography, the arts, and mathematics, although the two programs detailed in this study focus only on science and technology programs. In both of these programs, the focus is on firsthand investigation and the development of the skills of observation, identification, comparison, and investigation, and in the Solar program on experimentation.

Like Helen, Alice has a B.A. in psychology which she has supplemented with teaching credits in environmental studies and English as a second language. Her supplemental work suggests that Alice may subscribe to a broader, qualitative approach to the discipline of psychology. In the qualitative realm of psychology, the mental life of human beings—as it is directly experienced by them—takes precedence. Concepts such as conscience, values, guilt and anxiety, freedom and responsibility, and religious sentiment are important. Inquiry is guided by qualitative, intuitive and dialectical modes of thought rather than by the purely empirical (Phenix; 1964, 123–25).

The principles of both this psychological realm of meaning and that of environmental education seem to underlie the goal of Alice’s teaching, which is to help people understand nature in order that they may see that “[w]e’re part of the environment, we’re not separate, we’re all connected, and what we can do to help the environment can help yourself and your family” (Int-NCA2, 1019–33). In order to do this, she must help people learn not just the content, but also, and particularly, the processes of exploration and analysis by which the content is acquired (Int-NCA2, 482–86). Visitors, she thinks, can do this best through a personal experience of nature (Int-NCA1, 630–705), which may be enhanced by social interaction with other group members and the interpreter. For example, when she visits other sites for self-directed professional development, it is the behaviour of
the group “from the inside” in which she is most interested (Int-NCA2, 381–423). Perhaps because of her psychological approach, issues of fairness and personal development frequently emerge on Alice’s tour as it is represented in Chapter Seven.

On the other hand, Dwight teaches from his discipline-base in geography. Although he originally studied mathematics and social studies, his passion is clearly for geography. Although Phenix (1964) categorizes geography as one of the social sciences, he notes that

[It differs from the sciences in one major aspect, namely, that the ideal of geographic knowledge is not generalizations and laws, but full understanding of particular peoples and places. In this respect . . . [the] major organizing principle of geography is place rather than time, as in history . . . (p. 126–27).

Geography is the study of “man in relation to his earth habitat” (p. 19). Similarly, Dwight understands that geography is a “technique of understanding man’s relationship to his environment” (Int-NCD1, 422–49). While Dwight insists that he is not teaching this subject at the Nature Centre (Int-NCD1, 39–40), nevertheless its organizing principles and methods of inquiry are integral to his teaching. For example, the scientific method is for him a way to approach and to supply provisional answers for enduring questions:

Their experiments were particularly good. Notice the group that had the wrong hypothesis. I don’t tell the students they are wrong in the beginning. That’s the point of the experiment—to find out. The experiment is important. (FN-NCD3, 415–19)

It is not simply a method, but a perspective on the world (Gardner and Boix-Mansilla 1994) that includes imaginative hypothesizing and commitment, experimentation and engagement, interaction and sharing with other learners.

It is perhaps Dwight’s sense of his authority in the discipline, coupled of course with his lengthy experience in the classroom, that allows him to feel confident in terms of his own ability to keep the students’ attention: “I don’t want the schoolteacher standing at the top looking over there. . . . I want them listening, too” (Int-NCD2, 792–809).
Museology in the Nature Centre

Neither Dwight nor Alice refer to the discipline of museology nor to the science of nature centres. I argue that this has to do with their understandings of the nature of the site, a point I will return to in the next section, on educational materials.

Discussion

When I began this study I held several commonplace assumptions. The first was that each of the museum, gallery, and park in the study had one discipline base. The second was that curators were subject-matter specialists in the one discipline associated with the institution. The third was that these curators controlled the institution through their power over the acquisition, research, and maintenance of the collections. The fourth was that education coordinators, who recruit museum teachers and design their tours and programs, saw their role as one of making accessible to the public fresh scholarship in content disciplines. The fifth was that this role was changing because of challenges to the role of museums in society over the past three decades, which had resulted in the new paradigm of a museum that did not rest on a discipline base. My final assumption was that that museum teachers themselves were well versed and knowledgeable enough in the museum-related disciplines to recognize and react to these changes.

Disciplinary Knowledge Base

Overall, what I discovered was that for most of the teacher-participants in this study, the content disciplines of their respective institutions are less important to their teaching than I had supposed them to be. Interpreters, docents, and gallery educators, on the whole, do not consider themselves to be authorities in the discipline bases of the institutions—art, science, and history. Instead, teacher-participants in this study struggle to acquire the content foundation and are often unaware of the second, more philosophical, foundations
of the disciplines in which they are working. Only Dwight and Gord are teaching from the discipline they studied in university and taught in the high-school setting. For the others, their own disciplinary perspectives often seem to act as a sieve through which the new information is filtered (Wilson and Wineburg 1988).

This raises an important issue. Shulman's (1986) work was premised on the "transition from expert student to novice teacher" of secondary-school teachers (p. 8). The model of pedagogical reasoning I have used in this study assumes that the teacher is already knowledgeable regarding the subject being taught, at least to the level of an undergraduate. Other than the in-house training offered by the different institutions, the teacher-participants in this study share no such common base. As presented in the foregoing section, teacher-participants know and believe very different things about the disciplines they teach, and these things in turn influence their teaching. In many ways the practice of teacher-participants in this study more closely resembles that of elementary-school rather than secondary-school teachers. Responsible for a wide variety of tours and programs, albeit at a basic level, docents, interpreters, and gallery educators cover a range of topics comparable in scope to the subjects covered by the elementary-school teacher. Like elementary-school teachers (Gardner and Boix-Mansilla 1994), museum teachers have the potential to model the ways of knowing in the different disciplines, so that even very young students may come to appreciate that there are different perspectives from which to view the world. Some teacher-participants do see themselves acting as models in terms of how to 'do' the discipline. This is particularly evident in the cases of Dwight and Gord, both former high-school teachers in the same subject that they are teaching in the museum or nature centre. Joan, too, is attentive to "the art experience." All three are interested as much in the processes revealed by their teaching as in the content of it.

Gardner (1994) maintains that it is only by mastering portions of the specific disciplines, or at least having an awareness of them, that one is able to teach beyond content knowledge (p. 17). Such mastery is important not only insofar as it offers learners
a model for how to do the disciplines, but also in that it affords the teacher an "intellectual authority" in his or her work with the learners. Learners attend because the teacher is seen to know and not simply because they have to (Wiske 1994). When interpreters, docents, or gallery educators are less confident of their authority in a discipline, they appear to rely more heavily on the schoolteacher for group management. With adult groups, the learners themselves choose whether or not to allow themselves to be led. In this case, the teacher-participant must either find a way to become an authority in terms of his or her knowledge of or perspective on the discipline, or be willing to share authority with these adult visitors.

A second reason that scholarship in content disciplines does not figure prominently for teacher-participants may be that they work within institutions that do not clearly associate themselves with one discipline, with the exception of the Country Art Gallery where art is defined as the organizing discipline. Neither the Community History Museum nor the Nature Centre are organized on the basis of just history or just the physical sciences. Instead they appear to be more interdisciplinary institutions with an interest in the broader areas of social and environmental studies. Teacher-participants are expected to have a cursory knowledge of several disciplines rather than expertise in just one. This is reflected in the recruitment of museum teachers by the different institutions. Whereas the Country Art Gallery looks for docents and gallery educators with a "burning interest" in art or even, formerly, an undergraduate degree in the discipline, the Community History Museum and the Nature Centre look for those who have a demonstrated ability to work with people in groups.

Once hired, the interpreters, docents, and gallery educators describe training that goes little beyond the level of content knowledge. They infrequently talk about the acquisition of substantive and syntactic knowledge that would allow them to question and contribute to the very structure of teaching in the discipline (Wilson and Wineburg 1988, 537). Designers of museum exhibitions have long been exhorted to "be clearer about what they are doing and what visitors should expect when they come to a museum or visit
individual exhibits,” by more clearly defining the disciplinary perspective taken (Crew 1995). Curators and education coordinators in the institutions in this study do not seem to see the need to clarify their own philosophical views of the discipline and its purposes in order that their staff training may be consistent with them. Such an approach raises considerations for the practice of orientation and ongoing professional education to which I will return in Chapter Ten.

The Language of Museums

With regard to the discipline of museology, in the estimation of the teacher-participants it tends to be subsumed by the powerful influences of their own disciplines, as well as those related to the site. Although it is beyond the scope of this study to consider the idea in any detail, this may be because museology as a field grew of practical consideration, where workers seek solutions to problems, often without regard to purity of logical type (Phenix 1964, 273). Of all eight teacher-participants, only Gord and Helen have taken courses in museum studies. While both found the courses contributed to their personal ways of knowing the museum — by offering them different perspectives on the history and purpose of museums (Helen) and on the behind-the-scenes aspects of design and conservation (Gord) — neither felt this knowledge affected their day-to-day teaching (Int-HMG2, 758-66; Int-HMH1, 350). They acquired content knowledge but not the analytical framework that might allow them to focus on the process-oriented aspect of museums expressed by the term museum literacy. This is important not only for the development of the visitor but also for the development of the interpreters as museum teachers. Concepts that are intuitive or implicit are not available to be developed within a disciplinary framework. The “qualities” of the situation are not open for discussion. This becomes especially problematic when the unique expertise of museum staff, in contrast to the schoolteacher, is understood to be “how best to interpret the museum” (Harrison and Naef 1985, 11) and the “language of objects” (Sheppard 1993, 2). As Yellis (1984) notes:
We should be working in both directions, shaping our thoughts to conform to the texture and possibilities of our materials, even as we craft our practice to follow the shape of our ideas. By making clear to our audiences how we do this, what choices we make along the way, and what alternative constructs are available, and, most important, by providing the intellectual tools and raw materials for the visitor to erect his own construct, we will ultimately and inevitably strengthen ourselves as interpreters; our own view of reality, past and present, will be more dimensional and complex. (p. 14)

In the next section I explore further this notion of the situation of the museum, gallery and nature centre and what relevance it has for teaching in these settings.

EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS AND SETTINGS OF THE INSTITUTIONALIZED EDUCATIONAL PROCESS

In Chapter One I raised questions having to do with the relationship between teaching and the museum context:

- If museum teachers are unable to perceive the ‘gestalt’ of the situation, the interactive experience, what then do they think they are teaching?
- Are museum teachers fully open to the possibilities of the museum?
- Are museum teachers aware of the external issues affecting museums within which they teach? If so, does this awareness affect their teaching?

In this section I will explore teacher-participants’ understandings of the museum, gallery, and outdoor settings.

With reference once again to Shulman (1987), the teacher must “know the territory” of his or her teaching—the materials, institutions, organizations, and mechanisms that form not only the “tools of the trade” but also the context for it (p. 10). Grossman and Stodolsky (1994) describe the enormity of studying the contexts of school teaching, which includes not only the classroom but also the school, the district, and the wider communities schools serve. In the museum setting, this is made even more complex by the varying definitions of the museum’s role and mission.
To clarify my approach to context in this section of my study, I refer to Dewey’s (1963) criteria of experience, the two guiding principles of which are continuity and interaction (p. 44). The principle of continuity is that “every experience takes up something from those which have gone before and modifies in some way the quality of those who come after” (p. 35). The second principle of interaction, Dewey states, is that “an experience is always what it is because of a transaction taking place between an individual and what, at the time, constitutes his environment” (p. 43). For Dewey the environment includes not only the person’s personal surroundings but also “persons with whom he is talking . . . or the book he is reading, or the toys with which he is playing” (p. 44). Dewey’s term “situation” describes the interplay between the internal and objective conditions of the interaction (p. 42). The two principles present much the same framework for assessing the museum experience as do Falk and Dierking’s (1992) three contexts for museum visits—the personal, the social, and the physical (Ansbacher 1998, 44):

The museum experience occurs within the physical context, a collection of structures and things we call the museum. Within the museum is the visitor, who perceives the world through his own personal context. Sharing this experience are various other people, each with their own personal context, which together create a social context. . . . The visitor’s experience can be thought of as a continually shifting interaction among personal, social, and physical contexts. (Falk and Dierking 1992, 5–6)

Kilbourn (1998) contends that a key aspect of teaching is to comprehend the nature of the “situation”:

It is to be aware of being in a situation, a situation that has boundaries and textures and is of one sort rather than another. It is to have a sense of the situation’s wholeness, its immediacy, intensity, and changing quality. It is also to see the potential of the unfolding situation, to appreciate [a] sense of what the developing whole could become—and to work toward fulfilling that potential. It is to be fully sensitive to the possibilities of the teaching situation. (p. 49)

Similarly, Leinhardt (1988) defines “situated knowledge” as “contextually developed knowledge that is assessed and used in a way that tends to make use of characteristic features of the environment as solution tools” (p. 146). Both definitions depend on
recognition of the qualities or characteristics of the environment and the ability to see the potential for their use in the teaching relationship.

In this section I present the eight teacher-participants' personal knowledge and beliefs about, first, the qualities of museums, collections and exhibitions and second, the more social elements, like membership in "departments" or subject-matter communities to which they belong (Grossman and Stodolsky 1994, 182). Another critical component of the socio-cultural context, the teacher/learner relationship, will be addressed in the next chapter in the section on teacher-participants understandings of learners and learning in the museum setting.

**The Nature Centre**

One of the most striking findings of this study for me is that the teacher-participants in the Nature Centre do not consider themselves to work in a museum. Dwight and Alice see themselves as working in the out-of-doors which is for them neither a created environment nor a collection, but a microcosm of "the area, the world, the environment" (Int-NCD1, 23-43). They perceive an inside/outside dichotomy to their teaching represented by the inside of the Interpretive Centre and the outside of the nature trails. *Inside* is an environment where they can choose and control what is to be displayed or discussed as they bring forward or point out a stuffed animal, a skull, or a photograph (Int-NCA3, 642-69). For them this is essentially superfluous to the outside experience for which they believe people have come (Int-NCD2, 742-70). Only in the out-of-doors can Dwight and Alice engender the "carry-over experience" that is the goal of their work. In order to continue to "learn all the time" (Int-NCD2, 51-74), an interpreter must be open to the environmental experience, to "drop what you're doing and talk about what you're seeing" (Int-NCD1, 584-87).

At the same time, they are conscious of the enormity of nature and the difficulty of their task. Alice refers to her need to physically claim the space of the Nature Centre so that
she was no longer overwhelmed by it, but can focus and “pick up the sounds of the birds” (Int-NCA2, 546–72). Dwight talks about the need to have visitors relax and recognize the demands of this unique space for teaching and learning (Int-NCD2, 411–37). Visitors are to be enabled to develop an awareness and appreciation for the environment in order that they may either enact change at home or abroad (Int-NCA2, 1019–33; Int-NCD2, 1099–118) or experience its restorative effects (Int-NCA1, 429–55). According to these interpreters, visitors also need certain physical skills in order to thrive and, sometimes, survive in this environment (Int-NCA2, 257–317). They need to know when and where to “step off the path” so that they will not endanger either themselves or the animals and plants (Int-NCA3, 1274–1315).

Alice sees her work at the Nature Centre as an extension of her love of the outdoors. As a child she did not visit nature centres or museums, but revelled in the “aesthetic value” (Int-NCA2, 259) of being in the outdoors at her grandfather’s cottage or in the ravine near her home (Int-NCA1, 233). She learned skills such as swimming and canoeing because they enabled her to be outside (Int-NCA1, 325–26). On the wilderness canoe trips for troubled youths, she became interested in finding out about the plants and animals she encountered along the way. She would just pull out a book along the way and “learn WITH the teenagers” (Int-NCA1, 429–49). When she finally visited an outdoor centre as an adult, she was “amazed”:

I couldn’t believe how much was out there! . . . so many different things—what insect’s living there, the marks on the tree can be from a porcupine, that’s probably mouse droppings . . . just so many little things. But if you don’t really know what you’re looking for, you don’t see it. (Int-NCA2, 257–317)

As a visitor today Alice sees the walk or hike as an opportunity to learn with, rather than from, the interpreter (Int-NCA2, 496–509).

Like Alice, Dwight feels that it was his “real interest in working in the out-of-doors” that equipped him to become an environmental interpreter at the Nature Centre. Neither museums nor nature centres, but rather the summer camp where he worked as a
teenage counsellor "contributed to an interest in helping young people to develop their own kind of program and what they wanted to do" (Int-NCD1, 549-83). He feels it is this comfort with the environment and his strong sense of place that enables him to teach at the Nature Centre:

[S]o many teachers don't feel confident with thirty kids outside the classroom. They have to all be in twos and be quiet, holding hands—which is important, of course—but I don't feel sometimes that those are the students that are really enjoying the day. They're bringing their environment with them as opposed to enjoying the new environment. (Int-NCD2, 411-37)

Hein (1990) noted this same tendency amongst schoolteachers visiting the Exploratorium, a science centre in San Francisco, and concluded that "conventional education depends so much on power and the maintenance of control that the Exploratorium was threatening to teachers" (p. 134). Because they could not tolerate diminished control over students, they were not able to take advantage of the liberating environment (p. 134).

The Community History Museum

The three teacher-participants at the Community History Museum all considered themselves to be working within a museum, but beyond that there was little unanimity as to what museum meant in terms of the complex set of environmental features such as people, artifacts or art, architectural structures, equipment, learning materials, and so on (Ben-Peretz and Halkes 1987).

Gord believes museums offer "firsthand experience of... seeing life as it was in the past or looking at artifacts" (Int-HMG1, 148-60). He uses museums to find answers to his own questions, answers he finds by talking to museum staff on a one-to-one basis:

... basically [I] asked questions... of the people that were there—the interpreters, the gal at the front desk, and so on. That's how I learn. ... Reading labels is obviously important... but you can't find out everything you want to know [that way]. (Int-HMG1, 750-65)

Yet when describing the museum in terms of his teaching, he attends to the qualities that are most classroom-like. Gord as teacher describes the museum as an open, spacious, flexible
classroom with a tremendous variety of artifacts to be used as teaching resources. The physical structure of the museum allows for more flexibility as he moves with a group from a classroom space to an exhibition area to an activity room. The “tremendous variety” (Int-HMG2, 152–206) of objects allows students to look and look again. And the movement built into the program allows for one-to-one, small-group, or large-group teaching. There is an “openness” and “spaciousness” about the museum that allows an interpreter the freedom to create a positive learning environment. Gord concludes that the museum environment makes “for different teaching” (Int-HMG2, 152–206).

However, in the tour depicted in the study, we see him feeling limited by lack of space. This exhibit is cramped and crowded, and its texture and progression are not evident to the younger viewer (Int-HMG2, 1389–91). Gord feels that those who developed this display did not design it to be a “teaching resource”. As he says, “the props are good for teaching but it’s just the space allocation is not good” (Int-HMG2, 1414–30). He offers as an example the design for the exhibit’s ramped walkway, which was “set up by our exhibit designer without the idea of thirty kids tramping—the ramp broke the first time a group went in there” (Int-HMG2, 1414–30).

Like Gord, Helen as teacher thinks in terms of the spaces of the museum within which are housed the artifacts. When planning her tour, she conceptualizes it in terms of locations and rooms in which her teaching will take place rather than seeing the exhibits as texts in themselves: “... where I want to start, where in the museum, which location, which room I want to start on, which topic I want to start on, maybe the major things I want to cover, things that I DEFINITELY want to talk about and things that I might leave out... a rough outline in my head” (Int-HMH3, 43–48). Once there, she focuses in her teaching on the artifacts, the “old stuff” that first attracted her to the museum (Int-HMH1, 685). She chooses to use worksheets extensively on her tours to focus student attention on these artifacts: “They’re going to see five or six or ten or twenty things that they might not have seen if they had just randomly wandered around the exhibit” (Int-HMH3, 640–50).
On the whole, Helen’s personal experience with museums has been as an adult. Visiting museums and galleries wasn’t something she and her family did when she was a child (Int-HMH1, 683) nor does she remember organized school trips to a museum. As an adult she occasionally visited a large urban museum on her own but was more likely to “hit all of the historic places” while on holiday with her husband (Int-HMH1, 664–86). They preferred to “just wander around” an historic site until they’d “seen everything that each of us wanted to see” (Int-HMH1, 982–1002). Because her husband had studied history, she felt “he knew the characters and the people and so I was able to soak a lot of knowledge up off him . . . I just asked him” (Int-HMH1, 957–65).

Although she tries to make them her own, to transform the museum into a place full of “light and energy” (Int-HMH1, 800–21), there are still areas of the Community History Museum in which she feels uncomfortable teaching. This is not because they are technically unsuitable for teaching, but because she sees them as having been claimed for other museum uses:

Sometimes I’ve seen [the introduction] done—although I don’t like to do it—from the stairs in the Main Gallery—where the receptionist is. But I find I’m really self-conscious cause then EVERYBODY can hear you. . . . It’s mechanics to some extent, but I’m really conscious of that reception area being a place where someone’s going to come in to ask for information, the phones are going to ring, there’s other stuff that needs to be done. I don’t really consider the lobby a place [for] groups . . . . There were other interpreters working with the Titanic exhibit starting with that bank of pictures that were in the lobby and I never did it myself. I just didn’t feel comfortable. (Int-HMJ3, 578–89)

Jennifer shares Helen’s feeling that interpreters and their groups are consigned to the “corners of the building” (FN-HMJ3, 316). Unlike Helen and Gord, however, she is interested in the exhibits themselves (Int-HMJ2, 41–42; Int-HMJ2, 1677–79). Jennifer addresses the whole of the exhibit in terms of its dramatic impact (HMJ2, 975–92) as well as the particulars of the use of the objects within the exhibit. And she has begun to question the meaning that is engendered by the curator’s placement of artifacts. For her, the artifacts should be placed in historical context and be accessible and hands-on, so that the exhibits may tell the stories of the community (FN-HMJ2, 262–63). As a child visiting museums
with her family, Jennifer was fascinated by the links between the history depicted there and her father’s stories: “My father was a veteran, so there was always that talking of his experiences during the war. THAT made history come alive—when you hear it firsthand.” When visiting a museum today Jennifer takes guided tours or talks to an interpreter because “they have the extra information and . . . the anecdotal stories that . . . you might not get from reading a label” (Int-HMJ1, 765–78).

Jennifer perceives that such a setting requires teaching that is a form of drama in which both the museum teacher and the students may participate:

... today, for instance, when we were talking about passengers on the ship and looking right to somebody and saying, “Okay, now, you ARE this person. YOU’RE the third class. YOU’RE sitting down there. YOU’RE being locked down there. How is that you’re feeling?” So you’re drawing them into the program—that it’s not just passive—that they are actually participating as well. (Int-HMJ2, 111–17)

Perhaps, more precisely, she feels that museum teaching is a form of improvisational drama because it requires a constant responsiveness to a myriad of factors. As she experiences it, the museum is in a state of continuous flux as opposed to the more rigid nature of the school classroom:

... it’s very rigid [in the school classroom]. They have opening exercises for the first fifteen minutes and then they go right into—whatever—and then they have recess for fifteen minutes—so everything is in blocks for them and it never changes except when they have a field trip or an assembly. And then that can throw some teachers off at school—they’re really thrown off their schedule. Whereas in our setting, you just have to “go with the flow”. (Int-HMJ2, 740–47)

**The Country Art Gallery**

The manner in which tours are organized suggests how the Education Coordinator and the site’s education department conceptualize their tools of the trade; for example, the Nature Centre’s program write-up is divided into stops along the trails, while the Community History Museum’s script is arranged into subject areas. At the Country Art Gallery two different types of tour outline are in use, one for the school program, which is arranged
along conceptual lines according to the principles of discipline-based art education, and the second for the general public, which is arranged either by gallery (for general tours of the site) or by content headings (for exhibit-specific tours). The outline sets out the "common aesthetic" (Eisner 1985, 25) of the tour which, as I have discussed in Chapter Two, in turn modulates the experiences of both the teachers and learners.

At the Country Art Gallery, weekday tour outlines include the choreography, or assignment of gallery spaces. It is beyond the scope of this dissertation to discuss choreography in any meaningful way, but the use of this term raises interesting questions about the nature of touring and the use of the galleries, as was presented in Chapter Six in the discussion of the theatrical aesthetic of the art gallery. Attention on the part of the Education Coordinator to these aesthetic qualities suggests not only practical considerations, such as making sure there are not too many groups in one room but also a certain understanding of the gallery's "situation."

We see this addressed in Joan's practice. Throughout our discussions she refers to the issues of time and space—time to look at the artworks and to do the activities and the appropriate space in which to do these things. Her search for these is sometimes thwarted by the gestalt of the gallery, because it is for her a place that is constantly changing and exciting, but full of chaos and confusion (Int-AGJ1, 1088–90). Through practice, Joan believes she has come to know the gallery and to use its potential more fully:

I mean just everything is so different. There's nothing ever the same! That's what's fun about doing this. You could do it over and over and over and EVERY time it's different. . . . It's because of the kids . . . AND the circumstances! You have a day where everything's packed, people have different responses. And when we can spread out and have lots of room on our own—sometimes, I swear, a sunny day is different from a rainy, heavy, dull day. A morning is different from afternoon. . . . Everything is different! (Int-AGJ2, 757–69)

In order that they may work profitably together, she must lead her group through a maze of exhibition galleries. For, although the Country Art Gallery is designed overall as a series of galleries in a linear, chronological sequence, the tour choreography may skip back
and forth between them, thereby negating the natural flow of the exhibitions. As Joan explains,

What I hate is when you're coming back and when we're busy, that's what happens . . . it's starting at the far end and working forward. And of course all the paintings are in more or less a time line, so you're working backwards. And it is more awkward. I don't mind jumping around—I don't mind starting halfway through, going back and then coming forward. . . . I can do something like [Gallery] 5, 6, back to 3, 2—and that wouldn't bother me because at least then you're starting in the middle; whereas if you're starting totally backwards—aw, I just hate it, absolutely just hate doing it like that! (Int-AGJ2, 1424–82)

The theme of the school tour supersedes the theme of each individual gallery. Joan has students seek out individual works of art that illustrate her tour theme rather than having them examine the theme of the gallery as a whole, so that the students will not be "overwhelmed by the amount of stuff" (Int-AGJ2, 1765–1800). In some ways, then, the gallery can be seen as a stage upon which the tour is performed. On that stage, Joan thinks her teaching at times becomes a "personality performance" (Int-AGJ2, 159–71).

Joan draws upon her own experiences visiting public art galleries and museums when travelling as a child with her parents or today with her own family. She prefers smaller galleries and museums because they tend to be more focused and interactive. In a large institution, she mentally breaks the site into segments and only visits some. She takes guided tours to "hear stories" beyond the label text (Int-AGJ1, 683–840).

For Walt, the gallery is a container for his teaching in which meaningful interactions between people take place. His focus is on responding to the needs of the group rather than issues of time and space. He will "just do something else" if a gallery is occupied or time is running short (Int-AGW2b, 573–78). Like Joan, Walt sees the gallery as a place filled with "pictures, thousands and thousands of pictures" which can overwhelm the unsuspecting visitor (Int-AGW2a, 105–10). Therefore he chooses some of the artworks that he will discuss on each tour but encourages the group to make their own choices (Int-AGW2, 1543–72). He tries to help his groups place these pictures within the curatorial design of
the exhibits but in some galleries he finds these patterns difficult to comprehend and
to represent to others. As he says

... they’ve walked through six galleries of things that were
representational for the most part... you saw a progression up to there... . All of a sudden, here, you see thirty different artists—all these different
things—they’re side by side, there doesn’t seem to be any rhyme or reason
to any of it. Everything up until now has been patterned. (Int-AGW2b,
596-602)

When he is unable to make sense of a gallery, he simply avoids it (Int-AGW2b, 767).

Museums and galleries were not a part of Walt’s upbringing. Growing up in the
inner city, he feels he “bucked the trend” just by getting out (Int-AGW1b, 275) but he does
recall “In those days you did a lot of things on your own... you could go off and go to a
swamp or go to a stream or get on a streetcar and go to the winter fair... I remember
visiting the zoo a lot of times” (Int-AGW1b, 285-92). When visiting museums or galleries
today he finds that he needs help to focus on certain pieces in the collection. Audio guides
are a useful tool. He may also “hook on to the back of somebody else’s tour to look at
some of the things they’re pointing out” (Int-AGW2a, 79). But primarily, “When I go to a
gallery I have to read everything” in order to learn more about the paintings (Int-AGW2a,
115). He uses this information to enhance the way in which he and others view the art, to
compare and contrast pieces:

... I went to a large gallery and there was nobody in the gallery... it was the
Impressionists, and I went into this room... and I was reading about this one
artist... and it talked about another work of his... and I looked over and there
was the other work over there! So I went between the two works and I sat on the
bench viewing the two works, trying to bring those things together... once. ... That’s what I do with the kids in Gallery 2, when they sit in the middle there and
look at the three paintings and draw from the three paintings all those things. You
saw them doing that, that was important. (Int-AGW2a, 118-31)

Bern’s tours are not choreographed. Unlike Joan and Walt, he is not a part of the
hectic school schedule. General and special exhibit tours take place on weekends and
holidays and are generally the only guided tours operating at that time. Thus he has the
freedom of the gallery and his time is not restricted by the competing demands of numerous
school arrivals and departures. Like Gord at the Community History Museum he
conceptualizes the gallery as his classroom (Int-AGB1, 157 text insert). While he appreciates the aesthetic impact of a well-put-together exhibit (Int-AGB2, 1353–65), in designing his own tour he works directly from the artworks. The gallery is for him a kind of open storage room that allows the visitors to be immersed in artworks from the first to the last (Int-AGB2, 537 text insert). His goal is to help them develop the knowledge that will make sense out of this immersion experience.

It was only later in life that Bern himself began to visit museums and galleries (Int-AGB1, 592–603). On the whole he visits museums and galleries because he is attracted by certain works in their collections. However, he may also visit in order to “pick up something which I can use here in my tours, expand my knowledge” (Int-AGB1, 817–47). He describes one instance in which he visited the National Gallery in Ottawa to look at the Picassos because a visitor had raised questions in his mind about cubism: “And it had new meaning for me—Picasso and his Cubism—and I know where Picasso’s coming from. I may not collect his works but I appreciate Picasso; he made me think!” (Int-AGB2, 713–31).

He does not ordinarily take guided tours in museums or galleries, preferring to “go and look and find things for myself” (Int-AGB1, 929–52) because it allows him to do things “his way”:

I’m sort of a loner. I go on my own. . . . the reason being, first of all, I don’t have to try and accommodate your wishes. I want to go to the galleries today and go to the gallery tomorrow and, if I like it, I’ll go again the third day. But if I go with you, you may say, ‘Humph, ANOTHER gallery?!’ (Int-AGB1, 910–17)

In his own viewing, he relies heavily on brochures. He tries to read the available print material as soon as he arrives and then “I’ll just walk through and ask questions as I go.” His source of information is usually a person at the information desk: “which is very limited. I never get a chance to meet one of the curators, to meet THEM; these people are never available. But you ask as much as you can.” (Int-AGB1, 862–902).
Discussion

The Qualities of the Museum, Gallery or Nature Centre

These findings suggest that interpreters, docents, and educators are at the same time like and unlike visitors in their understandings and uses of the settings in which they work. As Falk and Dierking (1992) suggest, they view the setting from their perspective as insiders, or, more specifically, as museum teachers (p. 83). Yet there is no agreement across the sites as to the qualities to which they will attend. Broadly put, at the Nature Centre the site is seen as a microcosm of the whole “environment” rather than an artificially constructed milieu; at the Community History Museum the museum is seen as a series of spaces containing artifacts; and at the Country Art Gallery the gallery is seen as a container for works of art. The kinds of qualities to which the teacher-participants attend when they are teaching are influenced by their image of what a museum, gallery, or nature centre is, and in turn, these qualities influence their images of it. As I have noted in the discussions of pedagogical reasoning above, institutions also contribute to the formation of this aesthetic. This is the process of “world-making” discussed in Chapter Two. Thus we see in this study images of the museum, gallery, or nature centre that are as diverse as a microcosm of the world, a classroom, and a stage.

When they are teaching, the teacher-participants attend to certain qualities of this world (Schön 1987, 36). Qualities that emerge from the teacher-participants’ thinking about their sites are issues of space, time, and the tools of the trade = art, artifacts, and the natural world. Most conceptualize their sites as busy and potentially confusing places. However, these perceptions are complicated by the past and present experiences of interpreters, docents, and educators as visitors, and the personal uses to which they put the museum, gallery, or nature centre. In this respect, the teacher-participants make meaning of the setting through the same “continually shifting interaction among personal, social, and
physical contexts" as does any other museum user (Falk and Dierking 1992, 5–6; Falk and Dierking 2000, 107). Arguably, there are also ways in which being a student in a school classroom is like "serving an apprenticeship in teaching" (Lortie 1975, 61). But a student who chooses to become a teacher is no longer a student in that same context. In the case of interpreters, docents, and educators, their experiences as museum visitors are ongoing and present. They do not stop being visitors or users of the institutions in order to become teachers in them. Essentially, the world of the interpreter, docent and educator does not seem to be remade, but instead competes with the world or frame of that same person as a visitor.

The Social Context

Recent research suggests that it is the socio-cultural context offered by "elegant programs and conversations" that frames the world of museum educators as visitors (Spock 1999). This is reflected in the experiences of some of the teacher-participants in this study. In general, Alice, Joan, Jennifer, and Helen speak of museum/gallery visiting and the use of the outdoors as a social experience with family members and other people. Alice recalls her learning journey as one leading from the sheer pleasure of being in the woods, to the acquisition of skills to enable her to better use the setting, to an interest in finding out more information about the plants and animals she encountered along the way (Int-NCA1, 145–449). Each of these levels she achieved in the company of others—her grandfather, fellow campers, and finally the teens entrusted to her care. In the same way, Joan and Jennifer take a museum/gallery tour because they want to share the guide’s information and stories beyond the label text (Int-HMJ1, 765–78; Int-AGJ1, 683–840). Helen walks and talks with her partner at the historic site (Int-HMH1, 957–65).
THE PERSONAL CONTEXT

On the other hand, Dwight, Gord, Bern, and Walt do not recall early family experiences within the museum, gallery, or park setting. In adulthood they tend to use the museum or gallery as a resource for self-directed learning, or what Tough (1967) called "self-teaching." Tough found that self-teachers followed a series of steps in undertaking their own learning. After some specific impetus moved them toward a subject matter, they first decided what knowledge and skills they wanted to learn. Next, in choosing specific learning goals, they asked for advice, encouragement, and other assistance from family, friends, and colleagues. They then considered which resources would be effective for learning the subject matter, including books and articles, individuals to ask for information and advice, and information as to what they should observe and practise. In this they were assisted by subject-matter experts and others. After obtaining the appropriate materials and advice, they decided when and where it would be appropriate to study and, finally, undertook the learning project. Throughout the project they estimated for themselves their levels of knowledge and skills as to how far they had come and how far they had yet to go in order to reach their learning goals, sometimes using models or outside evaluators to help determine these levels of achievement (p. 73–74).

There is a markedly similar pattern in the self-teaching behaviour of Walt, Bern, and Gord. Museums and galleries form an important component in the activities they consider to be effective for learning about art (Walt and Bern) or the heritage of a community (Gord). While they may take a guided tour out of professional curiosity, each prefers to "go and look and find things for myself." However, they tend first to "read everything" that is available to them on the exhibit or site (Int-AGB1, 862–902; Int-HMG1, 750–65; Int-AGW2a, 115). Walt may supplement this information by using an audio guide, but both Gord and Bern "walk through and ask questions as they go" (Int-AGB1, 929–52). They interact with whomever may be on duty at the museum or gallery such as guards or information-desk attendants. These staff people become their "assistants" on the
learning project. Spalding (1993, 12) observed in Scottish museums the same reliance on guards and attendants as aids to learners, and renamed them “museum assistants” to encourage this direction. Walt and Bern observe particular artworks, and practise comparing and contrasting them with others on display (Int-AGW2a, 118–31).

Interestingly, these two accounts of museum experiences—the social and the personal—are equally divided between those who preferred visiting museums in the company of others and those who preferred to visit on their own. Furthermore, this division reflects the gender of the teacher-participants. Indeed, the social element in the women’s experiences is consistent with the finding of Belenky et al. (1986) that “women’s ways of knowing” emphasize “connection over separation, understanding and acceptance over assessment, and collaboration over debate” (p. 229). Certainly the division may also be attributable to temperament, intelligences, or other ways of knowing that are not gender-based but, considering the numbers of women involved in museum teaching, it is a finding worthy of future exploration.

**Situated Knowledge and Motivation**

The expectation is that museum teachers form part of a community of learners and are “a part of the community of practice we call the museum” (Falk and Dierking 2000, 107). They are, Tynan (1994) argues, “master” practitioners. Thus they more likely to pursue “mastery” goals (Paris 2000, 203), wherein they pursue the task for the sake of learning and of doing their best in preference to “performance” goals (p. 203), which they try to do quickly, avoiding challenge and giving up in the face of difficulty. Master practitioners, I contend, are also likely to be accomplished self-teachers or self-directed learners, as demonstrated by Walt, Bern, and Gord.

Paris (2000) hypothesizes that motivation may be “situated” within an environment like the museum in the same way as is learning. The factors that seem to motivate people are the personal construction of meaning, choice, challenge, control over the situation,
collaboration with others, and positive consequences (Csikszentmihalyi and Hermanson 1995b; Paris 2000). As Csikszentmihalyi and Hermanson (1995b) argue:

[T]he museum environment can either facilitate or hinder flow. Anxiety, embarrassment, or self-consciousness usually vary depending on where we are and who we are with. Social environments that facilitate intrinsically motivated learning support personal autonomy and responsibility rather than trying to control behaviour. (p. 74)

Earlier in this chapter I presented Gardner’s (1999) argument that museum teachers provide “spirited conversation, proper guidance and scaffolding” in the development of discipline-based learning (p. 127). Motivation is also thought to be positively influenced by the presence of “mentors, docents, and tutors [who] provide encouragement as well as models, and their support is often essential for maintaining people’s efforts and feelings of accomplishment” (Paris 2000, 206). This presumes not only that the prior knowledge of the museum teacher, situated in his or her own museum experiences, will be built upon and utilized—“the role of the teacher is that of a highly knowledgeable member of the community—a guide, not simply an interactive textbook” (Leinhardt 1992, 24)—but also that the interpreter, docents, and educators will have a high level of personal autonomy and responsibility over their actions. Yet this is not always the case. As I have illustrated above, the way in which these interpreters, docents and educators frame the museum and its collections when they teach is not always consistent with the way they conceptualize and use the sites when they visit.

In the same way that knowledge of a discipline brings with it a sense of authority so too, when a teacher-participant’s teaching stems from “acting in the situation” (Brown et al. 1989, 33) or working through a problem he or she has actually encountered within the environment, it feels “authentic” (p. 35) or “connected” (Belenky et al. 1986, 229). For example, both Dwight and Alice consider their knowledge of the Nature Centre to be consistent with what they have learned throughout the rest of their lives from and in the out-of-doors. Others have to work harder at this. For example, Walt explains how he sat on the gallery bench “viewing the two works, trying to bring those two things together . . .
once" and then explains "that's what I did with the kids in Gallery 2" (Int-AGW2a, 118–31). However, he is confounded when his situated knowledge, which Doering and Pekarik (1996, 20) call the "entrance narrative", does not resonate with one gallery’s presentation. Similarly, Helen shuns the reception area because it does not fit with her conception of a suitable space for teaching (Int-HMJ3, 578–89). She is embarrassed to be teaching there. Like many visitors who encounter dissonant concepts in an exhibit, rather than reframing their worlds, these two teacher-participants simply avoid the spaces.

In the same way, Jennifer expresses the feelings of dissonance she experiences between telling the "facts" as she feels she has been taught to do by the institution and sharing the stories of history, as she has learned from her own museum-going (Int-HMJ1, 955). She reflects on what this might mean for her teaching, as she has previously been quoted:

...I often wonder, when the kids are there, what's more important? Is it more important to teach them something—to have them have their heads filled with all this information? Or is it more important for them to have a positive experience at this museum—so that they will want to come back... and they won't get turned off? Because there are times when if you have a group and you're constantly yelling at them and telling them to do this—"You haven't read that! Go back and read that label!"—you're not going to have them reading that information AND they're going to be turned off from their experience AND they won't come back. (Int-HMJ1, 925–38)

As I discussed in Chapter Two, problems in the everyday lives of teachers are not likely to present themselves in well-formed structures (Schön 1983). One of the key steps to solving such a puzzle is to choose and name the things to which to attend. Teacher-participants construct the problem using the materials of the situation. Depending on, among other things, their disciplinary backgrounds, organizational roles, past histories, and political/economic perspectives, they frame things differently. As Schön (1987) maintains, they not only pay attention to different facts but they also make sense of them differently, in order to design a problem that they can solve (p. 4–5).

Experienced teachers have several frames from which to choose, incorporating different perspectives on several knowledge bases (Schön 1983, 165). They are able not
only to reflect critically upon the principles underlying their work, but also to switch from one interpretive frame to another in making decisions about teaching (Barnes 1982, 30). One frame allows for only one response. However, the ability to view a problem through several frames presents the potential for conflicts amongst different values. These are what Schön terms the “indeterminate zones of practice” (1987, 6). This uncertainty, uniqueness, and value conflict are central to any professional practice. In order to perform, the practitioner or, in this case, the teacher, must reconcile, integrate, or choose amongst these frames (p.13).

If the museum teacher does not recognize and confront the tensions that exist among personal biography, teaching practice, and institutional structure, he or she is liable to simply reproduce another style of teaching rather than working to produce one unique to the setting (Britzman 1986). In the next section I review the professional and volunteer contexts that help determine not only to which problems interpreters, docents, and gallery educators will attend, but also the ways in which these problems may be confronted and resolved.

**Institutional Controls**

These supporting milieus may be cast in many different ways depending on the perspective that one takes, for example, whether the museum, gallery, or nature centre is likened to a school, a volunteer organization, a business, or any other scenario. Each setting has unique characteristics that encourage or discourage certain types of teaching and learning activities. For example, Duthie (1990) found that the “social orientation” within the docent group of an art gallery was of particular importance to the participants in her study. These docents saw themselves as part of a “big family” (p.67). Similarly, Soren (1990) found that the volunteer organization of an historic house was a “sisterhood” (p.116). In this section I consider how teacher-participants perceive the institutional controls they encounter when working within their respective sites. I work first with a school-based model wherein I
consider how teacher-participant understandings are influenced by hierarchical, professional, and membership controls and then consider the marginalization that may better recognize the unique relationship that interpreters, docents, and gallery educators have with their respective institutions.

**Professional, Marginal, and Volunteer**

Ball (1987) defines three kinds of institutional control in schools—professional, hierarchical and membership-controlled. Barnes (1992) argues that the influence of these control patterns upon teaching is considerable (p.23). Hierarchies display characteristics such as the choice of goals by someone other than the person who is to pursue them, the definition of employee roles in such a way that individuals can easily be replaced, and the evaluation of the employees' work by persons not of their number (Barnes 1992, 22). A hierarchy is likely to promote teaching very close to the guidelines with a minimum of experimentation. On the other hand, a membership-controlled organization, like a political party or a union, will encourage those teachers who wish to risk experimentation and innovation but leaves others free to continue their existing practice (p.23). Professionals, in contrast, have more control over the range of tasks they undertake, determine their own goals, and evaluate their own results (p.22). There is a level of mutual trust that allows for shared change to take place.

The interpreters at the Nature Centre see their setting as professionally controlled. To reiterate the definition I advanced above, a professionally controlled organization is one in which workers have more control over the range of tasks they undertake, determine their own goals, and evaluate their own results. Under professional control, there is a level of mutual trust that allows for shared change to take place (Barnes 1992, 22). This democratic approach is evident in the Education Coordinator's extensive collaborative work with interpreters on program development, as well as in her encouragement of interpreters to work with one another. But, more importantly for this study, this attitude is expressed by
the interpreters themselves. For example, Alice explains that interpreters play a critical role in the development of new programs, particularly with relation to the stops of the program or, sometimes, changes to the trails (Int-NCA2, 811–20). She maintains that interpreters also independently identify and resolve problems at the site. For example, when one interpreter began coming in at eight o’clock in the morning in order to set up for a ten o’clock program, the interpreters got together as a group to talk about this and ways they could make it work better. They decided that time could be saved if the more popular programs were left set-up the night before (FN-NCA1, 424–31). Dwight compares the sharing that goes on amongst the interpreters with that which takes place in a department of a high school, a sharing that he finds even more profitable at the Nature Centre because the interpreters work together to teach the same things to school groups:

Some of the teachers there are really very rich . . . Each of them brings different strengths to the program. Each of us is different. That’s why it’s so good when you share, “How did you do that?” [smiles] And you ask, “Well, why does it work?” “Well, it works with me because I did this.” “Well, I’ll try that too.” And you get the opportunity to do that—that sharing; whereas in a classroom you’re more isolated . . . [You may be] sharing with your department . . . but you’re usually teaching different things there . . . (Int-NCD2, 438–48)

Interpreters at the Community History Museum also value sharing amongst themselves and contributing to their mutual efforts at staff meetings. Like Dwight, Gord equates these with the departmental meetings he used to have in the school setting (Int-HMG1, 53–73). Jennifer refers to the “post-mortem” discussions she will have with her partner-interpreter(s) following a tour and the camaraderie that develops from this (Int-HMJ2, 1261). However, what is distinctive about the interpreters at the Nature Centre is their shared belief in the significance of the environment and the potential for behavioural change in visitors that may occur as a result of their mutual efforts at the Nature Centre.

Let me now turn to consideration of marginalization as a control factor in the milieu experienced by teacher-participants in this study. Merriam (1997) explains similar marginalization in adult education as a result of the way in which that field has been professionalized (Merriam and Brockett 1997, 239). As discussed in Chapter Two, in the
museum and gallery world, professionalism is reflected in the hierarchy of the institution. Thus teacher-participants' feelings of marginalization may be the "flip side" of this professionalism. Not only are they excluded from the hierarchy by virtue of their distance from the collections and collection research (Anderson 1995, 27), but as well it is the nature of a hierarchy to promote teaching very close to the guidelines, with a minimum of experimentation. Thus they are infrequently called upon to utilize the expertise they have developed as teachers and thus it is not acknowledged or rewarded.

This mental distance is exacerbated by the physical separation of teacher-participants from the site. Although I have compared them to schoolteachers throughout this dissertation, in fact the working lives of these teacher-participants are more akin to those of entrepreneurs than of schoolteachers. I use the definition of entrepreneur as "contractor acting as intermediary" found in the Concise Oxford Dictionary (1964). As contract staff or volunteers, their jobs as interpreters, docents, or even gallery educator require them to deliver programs or tours only on an as-needed basis. Thus they come in to the site one, two or maybe three times a week and then go home. For these teacher-participants, the job is one of many enterprises they undertake. Without exception, all in this study hold other part-time jobs, run small businesses, or are actively engaged in other volunteer activities. As Helen says, museum teaching is "not much of a livelihood" (Int-HMH1, 1104–7). Because of the limitations of family and working life outside of the museum, teacher-participants are left with less time to participate in membership-controlled, unstructured (and unpaid) occasions. Lack of time and money also discourages the development of professional control through ongoing relationships with other interpreters or related professional associations beyond the site itself. The end result for teacher-participants is a feeling of marginalization both within the institution and within the larger museum field.

Walt, in particular, protests what he sees as the strictly imposed "hierarchy" (Int-AGW2a, 1196) of the Country Art Gallery. In his opinion, it is based exclusively on art
background. As he says, curators look down on educators and educators look down on
docents: “The curators, some of them, don’t look at WHAT we’re trying to do, they look at
WHO we are, trying to do it” (Int-AGW2a, 632–57). Like Walt, Joan and Bern struggle
with an art gallery milieu that they feel is essentially “elitist” (Int-AGJ1, 496–97) and
ignorant of them at the gallery level (Int-AGB1, 757). Similarly, Jennifer came to the
Community History Museum with the assumption that it was a volunteer position.
Thinking back, she’s not surprised that she thought that:

I don’t know if they did this purposefully . . . I think it’s the fact that we
are not considered staff. We will work there—we’re part of the Community
History Museum—but we’re not staff of the Community History Museum.
So in general terms, we are volunteers. And then we have just that money
that we receive for a tour . . . (Int-HMJ1, 85–96)

This elitism is reflected, says Walt, in the docents’ exclusion from the gallery’s behind-the-
scenes areas so that they do not have access to the director, to the conservation department,
or to the education department (Int-AGW2a, 1174). Instead, the space assigned to them is
behind the front counter in the crowded Loft:

“Where will we put [the docents]?”
“Well, here’s this closet, we’ll take the tables and chairs out . . . and stick
‘em there.” (Int-AGW2a, 1235–42)

For Joan, however, the docent group at the Country Art Gallery acted as a buffer
against the hierarchy of the gallery. Her description depicts a membership-controlled
association within the hierarchy of the larger organization, where people have more room to
try and fail than is possible within the gallery itself:

And there were ten of us. Well, our group ended up six by the time we’d
finished the year. There’s always a drop-off. And we became quite close,
very close, because we were all terrified. And you know what? We never
realized [that]. Well, at my age now I realize that most people are scared
when they’re starting something. . . . We had relative degrees of terror.
And people are scared of different things. I mean some people who haven’t
had much to do with small children are scared of the kids, and others are
scared of the material. We had one woman who was Spanish-speaking so
she was scared of the language. . . . And it was so much to learn! Oh!
So that’s how I got started. . . . I never looked back. So I stayed as
a docent for many years. I never really thought of doing anything else. It
used to be that the educators had to have an arts degree. . . . and we’ve had
a lot of changes in staff.
That’s been one of the hardest things to deal with at the gallery—is constant changes of staff. Now the people we have there now above us—in the department—nobody changed this year which is maybe the first time that’s happened. . . . In terms of the head of the overall department—looking way up, right at the top, one of the really top people in our department—now she’s only been here a year and a half . . . I think the six years before then there’s been five changes. I mean it’s just really, really difficult in terms of organization. (Int-AGJ1, 126–67)

Unlike Walt, Joan sees the Loft as a kind of sanctuary for docents where they gather at the end of their tours and talk: “it’s some place to bounce ideas back and forth” (Int-AGJ2, 28–43).

The fervour with which teacher-participants describe the broader professional milieu within which they work in the museum, gallery, or nature centre suggests the importance of this context for any understanding of their work. Part of what makes teaching so complex are the multiple and overlapping contexts that can influence teaching and learning (Grossman 1994). Museum exhibits, galleries of art and nature-centre spaces are part of that context, but so are the rooms behind-the-scenes and the interactions among people that take place there. That teacher-participants often feel excluded from those rooms and from those interactions, that they feel marginalized within their own institutions, must have an impact not only on their teaching but also on their further development as teachers in these settings, a discussion I will return to in Chapter Nine.

SUMMARY

In this Chapter I have explored teacher-participant understandings of the subject and the site, or scholarship in content disciplines and educational materials and structures. These findings suggest that different discipline-based ways of making meaning play a major role in the interpretation of the site, from the perspective of the teacher-participant as well as from that of institutional representatives like the Education Coordinator and the curators. However, it is only occasionally that the perceived content discipline of the site (i.e., art, history, or science) is consistent with that drawn upon by the teacher-participants (e.g.,
psychology, physical anthropology, political science, etc.). This also applies to a
museological way of knowing that is dominated in the literature by a visual arts/art history
understanding of the museum. Teacher-participants bring personal understandings of the
educational materials and context to the museum. This is prior knowledge, separate from
that developed through their on-site teaching practice.

Yet these individual ways of knowing are rarely explicitly acknowledged and
explored by either the teacher-participant or the representatives of the site. Without
agreement as to the content, the development of “pedagogical content knowledge”—“the
capacity of the teacher to transform the content knowledge he or she possesses into forms
that are pedagogically powerful and yet adaptive to the variations in ability and background
presented by the students” (Shulman 1987, 15)—is impeded or blocked entirely. When this
happens, it leads to a tendency on the part of the institutions to enforce one style of teaching
rather than working with interpreters, docents, and educators to produce a style unique to
the setting. Despite their perceptions of membership and professional control, the
pedagogical reasoning of teacher-participants is strongly influenced by an entrepreneurial
work setting that marginalizes them within the professional milieu, not only of their own
site but also within the professional communities of practice beyond the sites.

It is evident that the teacher-participants’ conceptions of learning and teaching play a
key role in the development of this complex pedagogical knowledge. In Chapter Nine I turn
to a discussion of the remaining two knowledge bases identified by Shulman (1987):
formal educational scholarship, and the wisdom of practice.
CHAPTER NINE

TEACHER-PARTICIPANTS’ CONCEPTIONS OF LEARNING AND TEACHING IN THE MUSEUM, GALLERY, AND NATURE CENTRE

In this chapter I address the remaining knowledge bases identified by Shulman (1987): formal educational scholarship and the wisdom of practice. This follows a discussion in the last chapter of the first two knowledge bases: scholarship in content disciplines and educational materials and structures. As I progress in my analysis it becomes evident that no single knowledge base exists in isolation from the others, but that teachers construct and reconstruct their goals in accordance with their varying views on subject matter, context, learning, and teaching. However, what appear to be particularly important to their understandings are teacher-participants’ practical theories on the nature of learning and the capacity of learners to learn. Taken together, these conceptions of learning and learners influence not only acts of teaching but also the teacher-participants’ response to training and continuing professional education in the field.

FORMAL EDUCATIONAL SCHOLARSHIP

Shulman describes the knowledge base for formal educational scholarship as the philosophical, critical, and empirical literature that informs the goals, visions, and dreams of teachers in addition to the empirical study of teaching effectiveness, which provides general teaching principles (Shulman 1987, 10–11). Its source is the scholarly literature devoted to understanding the processes of schooling, teaching, and learning. This literature
includes not only the findings and methods of empirical research in the areas of teaching, learning and human development, but also the normative, philosophical and ethical foundations of education (p. 10). Shulman includes among these foundations the writings of Plato, Dewey, Neill, and Skinner, along with works written primarily to disseminate empirical research but which have become important sources of concepts. He refers specifically to the work of Bloom, Piaget, Maslow, and Erikson (p. 10–11). Shulman argues that it is these normative, philosophical, and ethical foundations that are most important to the development of the teacher (p. 10). Similarly, in writing about learning in the museum Hein (1998) notes that any educational theory must address a theory of knowledge, a theory of learning, and a theory of teaching (p. 16). Nevertheless, as discussed in Chapter Three, museum teachers are thought to be unable to provide a coherent explanation of the nature and source of their own teaching and learning processes (Eisner and Dobbs 1986, 31; Worts 1990, 10; Anderson 1995). This is seen to be one of the critical factors in the lack of development of museum education as a profession (Eisner and Dobbs 1986).

In the following section I explore the ways in which teacher-participants in the study do and do not understand and use both the scholarly literature and the empirical research on learning and teaching in the museum, gallery and nature centre. Before beginning, I would like to comment on the various concepts employed below and used to come to a better understanding of museum-teacher knowledge and pedagogical reasoning. To organize my findings I utilize not only Komisar’s (1968) concept of teaching as occupation, act, and enterprise but also Schön’s (1987) work on reflective practice in professional development. These are linked by Hillocks’ (1999) hypothesis that conceptions of learning and learners’ capacity to learn, which he characterizes as “constructivist/objectivist” and “optimistic/pessimistic,” are critical to the conceptualization and development of teaching practice.
Conceptions of Learning and Learners

In this section I seek to answer the questions I raised in Chapter Two:

- Are museum teachers aware of the philosophical issues surrounding learners and learning in the museum?

- What are their theories of learning, implicit and explicit? How do they make use of them in their teaching?

Conceptions of Learning

Shulman’s (1987) model assumes that teachers will be graduates of teacher education programs where they will have encountered at least an introduction to the source of this knowledge base—the “important and growing body of scholarly literature devoted to understanding the processes of schooling, teaching and learning” (p. 10). Yet, as discussed in Chapter Three, interpreters, docents, and gallery educators share no such common pre-service training. Several important texts have been published in the last decade covering the growing body of scholarly literature devoted to the understanding of the processes of teaching and learning in museums as well as ongoing empirical research in these settings (Hooper-Greenhill 1991; Falk and Dierking 1992, 1995, 2000; Hooper-Greenhill 1996; Hein 1998; Hein and Alexander 1998; Hirsch and Silverman 2000). Yet only rarely do teacher-participants in this study refer specifically to a body of scholarly literature based in either the school or the museum to ground their own theories of knowledge and learning. For example, Joan refers once to the philosophy of art education of Arthur Lismer (Int-AGJ2, 244). On another occasion, referring to his academic practice teaching pre-service schoolteachers, Walt talks about Piaget and Maslow and the relationship of theory to practice:

They were there, okay? I could talk to my classes about Piaget and I could talk about the stages of Piaget and I could talk about the stages of
satisfaction, the twelve stages—who the hell was that? [Maslow?] Yeah, Maslow. I could talk about all those things but I had to relate them to a reality. You know it is no damn good talking about Piaget's stages of growth in a rote situation unless you can relate it to the fact that this is what it's about. (Int-AGW2a, 719–27)

Overall, however, few of the teacher-participants in this study refer to any standard learning theories, but underlying their work are “what amount to relatively simple practical theories that enable teachers to order activities” (Hillocks 1999, 113). In the next section I present the practical theories of learning that guide their practices.

Objectivists and Constructivists

Amongst the teacher-participants in this study, two basic orientations to learning emerged: they tend to be either constructivists or objectivists. In practice, none of the teacher-participants held either of these conceptions of knowledge in a pure form but taught as if both had some partial truth (Barnes 1992, 20; Hein and Alexander 1998; Hillocks 1999, 103). Thus I acknowledge that the following categorization is somewhat arbitrary and describes a tendency on the part of each teacher-participant rather than an absolute.

The objectivists conceive of knowledge as existing independently of the people who know it (Barnes 1992, 20; Hillocks 1999, 114). In this orientation, teachers are understood to have full responsibility for the learning processes, while the learner is assigned a more passive role as “the receptacle of externally transmitted knowledge” (Matusov and Rogoff 1995, 99). The “products” of education are important (p. 102). I turn first to the objectivists in the study: Helen and Bern.

When doing her Titanic tour at the Community History Museum, Helen aimed in her teaching to give students the “facts.” Helen says that she’s “the instructor and they’re the learners” (Int-HMH2, 83). For her the museum is a teaching resource, comparable to a textbook or a video, where students can “get as much information as possible on the topic” (Int-HMH2, 27–64). Knowledge is seen by Helen to be acquired rather than constructed. However, when teaching or working with adults, she modifies this framework:
... when it's an adult group—I don't know, maybe it's my perception—but I'm not their elder. I'm not more worldly-wise and all the rest of it. And they're not really there to learn and they're not doing a worksheet... they're there to learn—but they're not in the same context. I usually make it more informal and I encourage the two-way... "Please ask questions. Make your comments."... I guess just the dynamics of the group are different... they don't raise their hands... and, in the case of the group I'm talking about, most of them that were talking to me were OLDER. (Int-HMH2, 80–138)

Helen responds to this challenge by allowing her adult tours to become more of a dialogue: "We just did a very casual walk through and brief discussion... And then people broke off and they asked more in-depth, individual questions" (Int-HMH1, 65–79). If she doesn't do this, her experience has been that adults simply leave the tour: "You just notice your audience drifting away." (Int-HMH3, 963) Essentially, Helen assumes a more constructivist stance when working with the new audience. This same willingness to amalgamate objectivist and constructivist approaches was observed by Hillocks (1999, 103) among the community college teachers in his study.

For Bern, at the Country Art Gallery, knowledge is almost palpable. It is something that must be solid and "correct" (Int-AGB2, 649 text insert) in order that it may be built upon (FN-AGB3, 185 text insert). Knowledge is something that can be displayed and may even help to make one more powerful in the eyes of others (Int-AGB2, 649 text insert). Yet Bern speaks of learning as "discovery" (Int-AGB1, 65 text insert). Although the term "discovery learning" has sometimes been applied to any education that is premised on a belief in the learner's construction of knowledge, advocates of discovery education take a particular perspective on active learning. They argue that there is a certain body of knowledge which the learner will discover through hands-on activities if exposed to sufficient data or phenomena (Hein and Alexander 1998, 35–37). Knowledge exists outside the learner, but it is found rather than transmitted.

As further evidence of this stance, Bern sees the museum visit as part of a lengthier process of lifelong learning for the visitor. He recognizes that the adult visitors with whom he works are at different stages in their learning. He needs to know the group's level of "art
knowledge” (FN-AGB3, 361–66 text insert) in order to develop a common basis of understanding from which they can collectively explore the artworks. He assumes that visitors who take a tour of the special exhibit have already acquired the basic building blocks of art knowledge and that they have now returned to find out more about the artist (Int-AGB2, 1115–45). As with Helen, he sees the museum as a resource for acquiring more knowledge. The art gallery allows the docent “the golden opportunity of building up from a very elementary or peripheral understanding of art to a much deeper appreciation by the end of the tour” (Int-AGB2, 537 text insert).

On the other hand, the constructivists in the study believe that the learner needs to be engaged in purposive reconstruction of the knowledge offered (Barnes 1992, 20; Hillocks 1999, 114). I have placed the remaining teacher-participants (Alice, Dwight, Joan, Walt, Jennifer, and Gord) in the constructivist camp, even though their epistemological stance may not represent the richness of the formal learning theory of constructivism as discussed in Chapter Two. Alice, for example, emphasizes “hands-on experience” (Int-NCA3, 417–26) as a means by which students learn the “process of how to get there . . . how they can explore . . . and come to their own conclusions” (Int-NCA2, 482–86). Dwight wants students and teachers to have and learn from “experiences” and experiments at the Nature Centre (Int-NCD2, 792–809). To do that, they must “think through something and articulate it” (Int-NCD2, 932–72). Similarly, Joan and Walt conceptualize learning as a “process of discovery” (Int-AGJ2, 159–71) of which the most important component is curiosity (FN-AGW3, 145). To learn in the gallery is to be able to interpret art on one’s own (Int-AGJ2, 438–43) as well as to be able to visit and use museums and galleries independently (Int-AGW1, 313–18). For Gord and Jennifer at the Community History Museum, learners become whole persons through broader experiences of the world by which they also learn to learn and discover. The museum provides “certain kinds of experiential things” (Int-HMG2, 782–801) or hands-on activities (Int-HMJ2, 1300–11) helping them to do that.
The constructivists in the study see the process of experience and reflection as integral to learning. As noted in Chapter One’s discussion of the formal theory of constructivism, “To learn meaningfully, a person must choose to integrate new knowledge into his or her conceptual structure, relating the new knowledge to pre-existing knowledge and experiences” (Jeffery 2000, 213). Furthermore, because knowledge is seen to be constructed by the learner, the teacher does not have to assume the role of the expert. A constructivist stance allows for an approach that emphasizes mutuality in learning between teacher and student so that the teacher is able to cast himself or herself as a co-learner, or a member of a community of learners, a point to which I now turn.

A Community of Learners

In a community of learners, as defined by Matusov and Rogoff (1995), both the visitors and museum workers are seen as active in structuring the inquiry, with museum staff assuming responsibility for guiding the process and visitors learning to participate in the management of their own learning. The teacher-participants in this study see themselves sometimes “transformed by the interactions they have with the visitors”, as Falk and Dierking argue (2000, 107). Some of these interactions take place in the form of sharing experiences with others (Int-HMG2, 385-387). Both Jennifer and Joan perceive themselves to be learning when they are working with adult groups and are able to “share stories” with them (Int-HMJ2, 1677-1679; Int-AGJ1, 329). The interpreters, docents, and educator believe strongly that they are learning from the group. As Walt says,

I’ve always pictured my situation as a kind of inverted triangle with me at the bottom. . . . All these things above were experiences and other people that come to me, that I have used. . . . not me at the top, looking down at the group. (Int-AGW2a, 838-846)

Joan echoes his sentiment:

And I can talk about the same painting over and over and over and I hear myself making the same comments, but the answers come back differently. And it’s just really intriguing and I just really enjoy that. . . . So it’s a constant learning experience just dealing with people. (Int-AGJ2, 774-778)
Mutuality of learning is also promoted by communities of practice such as museum workers (e.g. curators, museum educators, conservators, etc.) (Matusov and Rogoff 1995, 104; Falk and Dierking 2000, 107). In Chapter Eight I introduced the idea of communities of practice in terms of the impact of the different institutional styles of control (hierarchical, membership-controlled, and professionally controlled) on interpreters, docents, and educators. I will return to this discussion below in terms of how the teacher-participants feel they learn to teach within these communities of practice.

**Conceptions of Learners**

Although teacher-participants in this study engage in no formal audience research or scholarly reading, they do have understandings of learners within the museum, gallery or park setting. Let me turn to these now.

**Pessimists and Optimists**

Hillocks (1999) argues that a key aspect of teachers' thinking is their belief in the likelihood that students will be successful in learning (p. 72). Thus he categorizes the participants in his study as either pessimists or optimists (p. 72). In his opinion, together with epistemological stance, these two beliefs drive the development of instrumental goals for teaching, which lead to differences in content presented and ultimately to the construction or reconstruction of the "microcurriculum" (p. 72). For example, Hillocks found most teachers in his study of community college teachers to be "objectivist pessimists," for whom,

... teaching is an act of telling, as though they are able to transfuse their ideas directly into the minds of the students. And when the ideas do not hold, it is simply that students have not applied themselves to the task of learning what was put forward for them to learn. (p. 93)
Table 2: Simple Orientations to Learning and Learners

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Attitudes toward the capacity of the museum’s visitors to learn are evident amongst the teacher-participants in this study. Walt, in particular, speaks of the importance of the docent’s attitude toward the learner’s capacity to learn:

If you listen to people at the gallery, or wherever else you work, they will say, “I had a crummy group today. I had a crummy group today. I had a crummy...” But you hear others say, “I’ve not had a better group!” You say, “I’ve NEVER had a bad group.” Why have you never had a bad group? Because you adapted to the group right away, you changed things. So if you’re constantly having a bad group then maybe you better look to yourself, and it isn’t those that are coming in. (Int-AGW2a, 377-85)

However, the capacity to learn is not attributed equally to all of the museum’s learners. Instead, teacher-participants tend to represent museum learners in terms of different subgroups: student as learner, adult as learner, group as learner, and schoolteacher (with group) as learner. Each of these subgroups is seen to have a different capacity to learn. In the following section I explore briefly the ways in which teacher-participants understand these learning capabilities.

**Student as Learner**

A student is considered to be an individual member of an elementary or high-school group who participates in a tour or program with his or her school class and schoolteacher. Teacher-participants tend to compare the student’s capacity to learn in the museum, gallery or nature centre with that of the same student in the classroom—and find the museum situation wanting. Joan believes learning to stem from a “long-term relationship” between teacher and student (Int-AGJ2, 126). If learning is defined in these terms as a long-term
phenomenon of which teaching is an integral part, then students cannot be seen to learn within the one- or two-hour time span of their visit. Docents, interpreters, and gallery educators who have been teachers in a school setting find the recognition of this limitation to be particularly troublesome. As Walt says,

[S]ome people who have a background in teaching—a classroom teaching situation—cannot adapt to the one hour. They see no result from what they have done, no long-term result. And I've been where people have quit because they just didn't have that fulfilment of watching them grow from A to B. In an hour they have been here, they have gone, and you never know whether you have had an impact over a long period of time. . . . You never know if they’re going to visit another art gallery, you never know if they’re whatever, and if that is one of the things that you hang your hat on, then you're in trouble. (Int-AGW2a, 424–50)

The teacher-participants believe that the experienced docent learns to cope with, in Joan’s words, the “very short-term relationship” (Int-AGJ2, 126) by focusing instead on the student’s capacity to enjoy and perhaps return to the site where, over time, they might learn. As Walt says,

[But] if they leave and say, “It’s a great day!”, that’s fabulous, that’s enough. . . . And some day down the road . . . you meet somebody who remembers you.” (Int-AGW2a, 424–50)

Similarly, Dwight acknowledges that he has a group for only two hours—“a short length of time but something you have to face” (Int-NCD2, 196)—so he has to be “optimistic” (Int-NCD2, 314) about the effects of his teaching.

Helen is unable to share this optimism. She recognizes in herself a need to see the long-term impact offered by school teaching that seems to be absent from museum teaching. She teaches to “make a difference” in the lives of children, to “make a stronger connection” (Int-HMH1, 1153–67). Jennifer feels she has become more pessimistic about the capacity of children to learn, not just in the museum but in society as a whole:

[B]ecause I have been [at the Community History Museum] for a number of years, I have seen changes. When [I] first came, I think the kids were very open and they were eager to learn and they weren’t maybe as sophisticated as they are now. . . . Let’s say a student in grade 3 . . . when they came to the museum and they would see an artifact that would be INTERESTING! Now they kind of look at it and it’s, “Where’s the Nintendo?” They just don’t seem to come away with the same feeling of “Oh, that was really fun!” or to see something. . . . kids coming just haven’t the patience to read
labels or to look at something. They want instant information and they want
to be able to touch and to handle. I guess I’m almost sounding a little
 cynical . . . but I think there has been a change . . . I think there’s just sort
of what we see in society in general, with kids. They don’t care and there’s
a little bit of lack of respect. (Int-HMJ1, 261-87)

Despite her growing cynicism, however, Jennifer is still relatively positive about the
capacity of children to learn. When things go wrong, it is the responsibility of the teacher-
participant to look for ways to improve rather than to blame the learner:

You don’t have a long time to decide, “How can we change? How can we
incorporate this?” If you see that something’s not working . . . you HAVE
to get on it right away. (Int-HMJ2, 1286-89)

Adults as Learners

It is taken for granted by the teacher-participants that adult individuals who visit museums
are likely to be successful in their endeavours. However, the teacher-participants differed in
what they felt the purpose of the adult visit to be—to learn or to socialize? Bern feels that
adult visitors to the Country Art Gallery have come “with the specific aim of seeing and
learning and enjoying” (Int-AGB2, 330-41). As he explains it, the motivation of the
learners is the crucial difference between teaching in the classroom and teaching in the
gallery. While students in the classroom need to learn skills and knowledge identified by
others as what will help them to survive in the world, gallery visitors come in order to
broaden their lives (Int-AGB2, 456-507). This may include more profitable use of their
leisure time, new avenues for exploration, enhanced understanding or just increased
confidence (Int-AGB2, 507 text insert). Likewise, Walt believes that

They are coming to learn something that’s absolutely theirs . . . They want
to learn something. They want to see something . . . new; therefore, they’re
learning something and I’m just trying to enhance their learning. (Int-
AGW2a, 65-74)

At the Nature Centre, Dwight calls it the “natural way of learning” because the questions
are the visitors’ own, to which they seek answers for personal reasons (Int-NCD2, 976-96).
Joan, Jennifer, and Helen share in this optimism about the capacity of the adult visitor to learn. But, as discussed in Chapter Eight, they emphasize the social element of the museum experience. For them, "sharing stories" and conversation are essential components for adult learning to take place in the museum (Int-AGJ1, 811-18; Int-HMH1, 65-79; Int-HMJ2, 1677-79).

Groups as Learners
Pre-booked groups comprise from twenty-five percent of total visitation, at the Country Art Gallery, to almost sixty percent at the Nature Centre. Such groups may include preschoolers, public and private school students from kindergarten to senior high school, English as a second language (ESL) classes and other adults learning in a formal setting. Not included in this figure are the ad hoc groups that form to participate in daily or weekend programs, hikes, walks, and tours at the Nature Centre and the Country Art Gallery. The teacher-participants in this study are contracted or recruited to work with these different groups of visitors and are scheduled on a group-by-group basis as needed. The focus of their teaching is the group. Although as noted above there are many different types of groups, the teacher-participants tend to think in terms of (1) school groups and (2) other, usually adult, groups.

The assessment of and adaptation to groups of learners is identified by the teacher-participants as one of their greatest challenges. As can be seen from the tours represented in Chapters Five, Six, and Seven, little information is available beforehand and what is available is subject to change. Therefore, much of the teacher-participant’s preparation is based on a generic understanding of ages and stages acquired through site training or through personal experience as either a schoolteacher or a parent. Constant improvisation is required. Once a group arrives, the teacher-participant may find them to be above or below grade level, a mixture of grade levels and abilities, a much smaller or larger group than was
expected, totally unprepared for the visit, or veterans of a previous, very similar, visit to the same site—or a combination of all of the above.

However, while teacher-participants recognize there are individual needs in the group with whom they are working, they must develop an approach that best meets the needs of the whole group within the limited time available. Thus, building upon Joan’s comments above, a teacher-participant enters into a short-term relationship with a group rather than a long-term relationship with a number of individuals (AGJ2, 159–171). This understanding of the group as learner is a key factor in the development of the performance aesthetic I discussed at length in the case analysis of the Country Art Gallery in Chapter Seven.

Issues of fairness and attention to the individual learner are judged against the needs of the group as learner. For example, Joan adapts her tour if a significant number in the group have visited the gallery before (Int-AGJ2, 1635–54). Alice struggles to construct a “level playing field” on which all participants have an opportunity to shine (Int-NCA3, 1193–1202). This is particularly true of large student groups into which the teacher-participant cannot reach on an individual basis. Small groups allow for one-on-one “conversations” that revolve around the interests of the learner rather than the prescribed content of the tour or program (Int-NCA3, 1115–81).

Similarly, in keeping with the teacher-participants’ thinking about the capacity of individual adult learners to be successful in the museum, adult groups are most often viewed as peers with whom the teacher-participant may share knowledge (Int-AGJ1, 329–30), personal experiences (Int-NCD2, 250–61), or stories (Int-HMJ2, 1677–79). Bern develops a “relationship” with the mostly adult groups at the Country Art Gallery because he believes there is a comfort level for visitors implicit in the anonymity of a larger group, and he “gets more energy from a large group” (FN-AGB3, 345). The most successful tours are, for Bern, those with a large number of people, because they allow for this collective exploration of the art (Int-AGB1, 214–24). He honours his guests as individuals
by “acknowledging their contribution to the experience” of the group tour (Bern’s response to FN-AGB1, 71–74). He says that to be “recognized as a person is probably one of the finest gifts we can extend to one another” and encourages the visitor to become a part of the group by exploring commonalities amongst themselves, with him, and with the artists on display (FN-AGB1, 110 text insert). As he says,

You’re my kin. . . . We had not known each other five minutes ago and here we have the opportunity of communicating here what we thought about something of common interest—both of us keen. And that is what it’s all about. (Int-AGB2, 430–43)

Schoolteachers as Learners

Given the difficulty of getting inside a group in such a short time, perhaps it is not surprising that many of the teacher-participants in this study consider the schoolteacher to be the key learner. They are hopeful that schoolteachers will not only learn the content of the museum program or tour, but will also be able to incorporate the museum, gallery, or park’s approach to the subject into their classroom teaching. For example, Alice notes that an experienced schoolteacher will have learned that “it’s fairly open [at the Nature Centre], that there’s lots of different trails and ways to go” (Int-NCA2, 837–49). Dwight hopes that the schoolteacher will “experience” the site along with the students and he models that involvement for them (Int-NCD2, 792–809). However, the teacher-participants acknowledge that the museum may be “foreign soil” for the schoolteacher (Int-HMG2, 1182). To help schoolteachers bridge this perceived gap, these teacher-participants “structure” their teaching more than they would otherwise do in the non-school setting. They believe schoolteachers to be more task-oriented (Int-HMG3, 111), more product-oriented, than teachers in the non-school setting. Therefore, in order to accommodate them, the teacher-participants try to stick to the advertised theme of the program or tour (Int-NCD2, 244) and to such devices as worksheets (Int-HM13, 687–98). In this way even those who express a constructivist conception of learning may take a more objectivist approach to their teaching.
Remarks such as that made by the schoolteacher on Gord’s tour in Chapter Five ("Are you playing or working?") tend to affirm the perceptions of the teacher-participants. Griffin and Symington’s (1997) study of school excursions to museums found that schoolteachers in general feel they have little role in the planning or execution of the trip (p. 773). They, along with their students, “identified learning almost exclusively with the type of activities that go on at school, especially pen-and-paper activities [like worksheets]” (p. 773). Participants were asked to relate what they had learned in a dedicated hands-on area of the museum:

One group that used this space was adamant that: You don’t learn anything in there— you play. Interestingly, it seemed that most of the teachers had the same view. If the students did ever get the chance to move into this room they were generally chased out again by the teachers so they could get back to “the real work” in the specified gallery. (p. 774)

In reviewing the above analysis, several observations can be made. The docents, interpreters, and gallery educator in the present study were not cognizant of literature on museum learners and learning and only rarely referred to more general theories of learning and teaching. Instead, like the community college teachers in Hillocks’ (1999) study: “... underlying their work are what amount to relatively simple practical theories that enable teachers to order activities” (p. 113). Thus, teacher-participants develop objectivist or constructivist views on learning and pessimistic or optimistic views on the learners’ capacity to learn. However, unlike Hillocks’ finding that the community college teachers in his study were objectivist pessimists (p. 93), teacher-participants in this study tend to be constructivist optimists. In other words, they tend to believe that learning is the purposive reconstruction by the learner over time of the knowledge offered (Barnes 1992, 20; Hillocks 1999, 114), and that the learner is capable of doing this even though the docent, interpreter, or gallery educator may not observe the results of the learning.
Table 3: Teacher-participants' Orientation to Learning and Learners

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The teacher-participants' approach to learners and learning is important if the curriculum of the museum is seen to be construed not only by the curators and exhibit designers who create the exhibits and the education coordinator who designs the tour but also by the interpreter, docent, or gallery educator who presents the material to the visitors. As I discussed in Chapter Two, in its simplest terms the curriculum is a medium by which educators attempt to represent what happens or what ought to happen in educational practice and how it is to be achieved. The teacher-participants develop their own curricular structures, based at least partially on their views of learners and the nature of learning. This is particularly striking in the contrast between the two Titanic tours presented by Jennifer and Helen in Chapter Five. Whereas Helen is interested in the transmission of facts and is frustrated by the students' seeming unwillingness to accept those facts, Jennifer wants to help students to learn from this historical approach and believes they are capable of doing that in their "own time". Their respective selections of subject matter and its reconstruction for teaching is heavily based on their different constructivist/optimist and objectivist/pessimist views of students and ideas about the nature of learning (Hillocks 1999, 94). In the next segment I explore the ways in which these nascent theories of learners and learning are employed in the practice of teaching.
Conceptions of Teachers and Teaching

In this section I continue my analysis of the knowledge base of formal educational scholarship with a focus on the teacher-participants’ understanding of the scholarly literature and empirical research on teaching. In particular, I focus on these questions raised in Chapter Two:

- How do museum teachers, those charged with face-to-face education and interpretation, describe, understand, and evaluate the success of their roles in these different settings? Do the terms education and interpretation and the docent function have meaning for museum teachers? If so, what does this mean for the practice of teaching in the museum setting?

- What do museum teachers call themselves? What effect, if any, does this have upon their teaching?

- What ‘world’ may have been formed from the professional knowledge and know-how of museum teachers? In what way does the practice of teaching frame and reframe this world?

Museum Teaching as Occupation

When asked to describe their titles or what it was they were doing when they were teaching in the museum, gallery, or nature centre, the teacher-participants in this study produced a wide variety of answers. Their titles ranged from interpreter, nature interpreter, environmental interpreter, and naturalist to docent, educator, and gallery educator. In terms of what they were doing the discussion ranged from “teaching” to “interpreting” to “guiding” to “facilitating.” For example, the title given by the Nature Centre to the teacher-participants is “educational assistant,” but the Education Coordinator refers to them as
"nature interpreters” and in site publications they are called “naturalists.” At the Community History Museum teacher-participants are titled “interpreters.” At the Country Art Gallery the official titles are “docent” (volunteer staff) and “gallery educator” (paid staff). As a result, most teacher-participants are unsure what to call themselves. As Alice comments,

Probably the word used the most is an “interpreter”. I think on our pay sheet it might be “education instructor’. We've actually had discussions about this and nobody agrees. I've had [school] teachers call me the "tour guide" and I don't feel comfortable with that. I feel that I should be on a bus or something. Or a tour in a museum... [The schoolteachers] don't know what to call us. We're just [“nature centre] staff” or whatever— “teacher” or “instructor.” But I think more often you hear “interpreter” and then that covers more weekends, too. Cause you're not a “school instructor.” You're not “education” per se. But then you can say that education is happening all the time at the centre, anyway. (Int-NCA1, 92-122)

For the most part, these titles and descriptions are labels assigned by others (the institution or members of the general public) to activities undertaken by the teacher-participants. Labels describe the jobs that the teacher-participants do at the respective sites and are frequently determined by tradition within the institution or within the broader fields associated with the museum, gallery, or nature centre. There was little in the data to suggest that any particular thought had been given by supervisory staff to the assignment of these titles other than to differentiate paid and unpaid staff, as Williams claims (1984a). This casual attitude to the creation and use of titles reflects the “categorical miasma” (Ekos 1989) of the broader museum education field. For instance, a posting on the British Group for Education in Museums (GEM) listserv listed nineteen possible titles for a museum teacher: facilitator, education guide, information assistant, explainer, museum interpreter, enabler, communicator, museum speaker, access officer, animateur, discovery worker, go-between, docent, gallery guide, illuminator, sparkler, lynx (i.e., one who makes links), and live guide (Mackay 2000).

While this may seem an intellectually trivial point, in practice these understandings of the museum teacher carry huge symbolic weight, not only in terms of how interpreters, docents, and gallery educators think of themselves but also in terms of the level of esteem (or lack thereof) in which they are held by the rest of the museum world. As Walt
comments, “The curators, some of them, don’t look at what we’re trying to do, they look at who we are, trying to do it” (Int-AGW2a, 632–57). Roberts (1997) demonstrates that this is more than semantics. It is difficult to move forward to define a new category of activity, she says, if one is tied to old patterns of thought and language (p. 8).

In coming to understand Shulman’s notion of the knowledge base for formal educational scholarship as applied to museum teaching, I have found it useful to return to Komisar’s (1968) three levels of teaching, as discussed in Chapter Two: (1) teaching as occupation, (2) teaching as enterprise, and (3) teaching as supporting and intellectual acts (p. 68). To review briefly, according to Komisar the occupational level names an activity habitually engaged in. Teaching as occupation explains much of the discussion described in the preceding paragraph. As noted in Chapter Two, “The difficulty is that interpreters seem to consider everything they do, including education, as interpretation.” (Randall 1996, 7)

On the other hand, teaching as enterprise addresses teaching as an activity in which one engages with an intent to produce learning. The third level, the intellectual and supporting acts of teaching, aims to produce awareness of some point by divulging to the learner not only the intent of the lesson but also the reasons behind it. Komisar’s representation of teaching as occupation, enterprise, and act helps not only to make sense of the many ways in which teachers and teaching have been interpreted in the museum setting, but also to focus the discussion in this thesis on the intellectual and supporting acts of teaching and teaching as enterprise.

**Museum Teaching as Enterprise**

In speaking of their own practice, the teacher-participants talk more about the enterprise of teaching. As discussed in Chapter Two, teaching as enterprise implies the learning of specific information or processes. In my opinion it is closely aligned with what I have described earlier in this Chapter as an objectivist approach to learning. To review briefly, an objectivist sees knowledge as existing independently of the people who know it and
understands teachers to have full responsibility for the learning processes, while the learner is assigned a more passive role as receptacle. Education is seen more as a product. Therefore an objectivist approach to teaching, or what Komisar (1968) terms teaching as enterprise, lends itself to concerns for accountability and tests of teaching effectiveness.

Although such tests of teaching effectiveness have been a popular approach in past evaluation studies, Falk and Dierking (2000) contend that museum evaluation based on the acquisition of information is an inadequate indicator of the type of learning that takes place in museums. They believe the research question should not be, "What does an individual learn as a consequence of visiting this museum . . . ?" but rather "How does this museum . . . contribute to what someone knows, believes, feels, or is capable of doing?" (p. 11-12). Nevertheless, the teaching-as-enterprise orientation continues to be promoted and reinforced by the institutions for which the teacher-participants in this study work particularly with regard to school tours and programs. For example, as noted in Chapter Six, the learning outcomes attached to Joan's Learning from Landscape tour emphasize the acquisition of specific information and processes as directed by the school curriculum:

Through activities, games, and directed observation and discussion of landscape paintings . . . students will be able to:

1. know and be able to use the basic elements of design and art vocabulary
2. understand how artists manipulate media and design elements to express ideas and impressions
3. know about the artists, their work and the context in which their work is viewed

Docents and gallery educators are directed by the gallery to focus self-assessment of their teaching on the successful acquisition of this information by the learners.

In practice, however, those teacher-participants who hold an essentially constructivist approach to learning resist this conception of teaching and its form of evaluation, choosing to focus instead on, as Alice describes it, the "process of how to get there . . . how they can explore . . . and come to their own conclusions" (Int-NCA2, 482–
86). In order to achieve these constructivist ends, teacher-participants conceptualize their practice in terms of the supporting and intellectual acts to which I will now turn.

THE SUPPORTING ACTS OF MUSEUM TEACHING

Supporting acts of teaching are those intended to contribute to the production of learning, such as prompting, cueing, reinforcing, approving, showing, etc., as well as those steps that are “ego-strengthening” for the learner such as helping to reduce anxiety, arouse interest, and focus attention (Komisar 1968, 75). Such teaching, Komisar says, is intended to “put or maintain the learner in a fit state to learn” (p. 75).

In terms of contributing to the production of learning, teacher-participants see their practice as supporting the acts of teaching of the schoolteacher in the classroom before or after the visit. As Joan comments,

Now, if they’ve had some preparation, you can reinforce it and then they really learn. And then they can get really excited about it! (Int-AGJ2, 274–86)

If the teacher has done preparation then I would see [we are] co-workers... . You can say, “Oh, I see you’ve talked about this in class” and the teacher gives you a confirmation. (Int-AGJ2, 1793-94)

Likewise, Helen sees her relationship with the schoolteacher as a kind of partnership (Int-HMH3, 498–552):

You just get some classes that they know a lot already and you get other classes that know NOTHING about what you’re going to teach them. So it’s nice to know before starting if you’re jumping in as a review or if you’re not. If you go in with the assumption that they know some of these terms and you get all these blank faces it’s nice to know, okay, this IS an introduction, we’re going to have to introduce these terms. (Int-HMJ3, 444–69)

Similarly, Alice’s aim is to “accentuate what they’ve already taken in class” through hands-on experience (Int-NCA3, 417–26). Like Helen, Alice is looking for a team approach in which the schoolteacher knows what she or he wants from the visit, provides discipline as needed, and lets Alice know “if I’m on track or not” (Int-NCA1, 54–65):
I appreciate... input because then it’s coming from her as a teacher, and she knows them, rather than from me—this person that they’ve just met ten minutes ago. They can see it’s tied in and that she’s going to be asking them questions when they get back. (Int-NCA3, 330–415)

However, many of the teacher-participants in this study express a fear that these supporting acts of teaching verge on becoming “acts of telling” (Hillocks 1999, 92). For them, the words tour or tour guide denote a “walk and talk” stereotype (McCoy 1989, 138):

Alice (Nature Centre)
I’ve had [school] teachers call me the “tour guide” and I don’t feel comfortable with that. I feel I should be on a bus or something [small laugh] . . . or on a tour in a museum. (Int-NCA1, 92–122)

Dwight (Nature Centre)
A tour is quite a different thing. They are tourist-intended. (Int-NCD2, 1163–67)
Tour is “show and tell” versus “in touch” of a program (FN-NCD2, 683 text insert)

Gord (Community History Museum)
I’m not a tour guide... it’s not just a question of being a “guide”, walking around saying, “Look at this” or “Look at that”... (Int-HMG1, 65–72)

Joan (Country Art Gallery)
I give tours [but] “tour guide”—that doesn’t really do it either. It makes me think of somebody just walking around TELLING you. (Int-AGJ1, 28–50)

I do not interpret this to be a negation of the importance of information-sharing. As demonstrated in Chapter Eight, the teacher-participants recognize that telling is one important part of teaching. What I think they are describing here is a concern that the qualities of their interactions with the visitors/learners be balanced. Too great an emphasis on arriving at a specified object of learning may lead to the “telling” tours described above. The interpreter, docent, and gallery educator seeks a dynamic mean among supporting acts that are intended to contribute to the production of learning with those steps that are ego-strengthening for the learner (Komisar 1968, 75). The teacher-participants recognize and work with these qualities. Too great an emphasis on methods results in the teacher mistaking himself or herself for the curriculum and neglecting to direct student/learner attention to materials beyond the person (Schwab 1978, 128). As Helen says, “[U]sually they’re focused on YOU and what you have to say, and here is a group with one eye on me
and one eye on the artifacts" (Int-HMH3, 931–52). On the other hand, too great an emphasis on ego-strengthening may lead to a tour or programme with no substance, which actually discourages intellectual growth by relying only upon the existing experience of the visitor/learners (Schwab 1978, 131). For example, Walt worries that the emphasis in his tour on the learners and their enjoyment may not be seen as educative. He insists that "the subject matters" and that the group "LEARNED stuff today" (Int-AGW2a, 298–336).

As for the ego-strengthening supporting acts, as seen in the discussions of pedagogical reasoning in Chapters Five, Six, and Seven, interpreters, docents, and gallery educator attend closely to the qualities of visitor anxiety, interest and attention. The common aesthetics of owntime, performance, and passion allow teacher-participants to address these qualities within large groups of strangers and in the very limited time available to them. They recognize that sometimes they are better able to perform these ego-strengthening acts than is the schoolteacher. For example, Joan thinks she may be able to "give a few of those kids a little bit of special attention that maybe they don’t get much of" (Int-AGJ2, 319). Gerd relates,

... it’s nice every once in a while to have a small group because it does allow you to do some of the things that you like to do. You can give the individual attention, one on one, you can go around and talk to each of the kids, and in that length of time you can know their names. (Int-HMG2, 34–97)

Alice thinks she can offer students the chance to start a “fresh slate” (Int-NCA3, 729–47) because a different environment may “bring out something positive” (Int-NCA3, 1010–11).

Many times the interpreters, docents, and gallery educator content themselves with the fulfilment of these ego-strengthening acts of teaching. This is demonstrated by the importance assigned to the learners’ enjoyment and comfort in the setting. For example,

Gerd comments,

I think it’s likely the most important thing that you want to achieve is to make kids enjoy themselves and enjoy the learning experience. You want them to come back, basically. . . . (Int-HMG2, 299–301)
Helen works to replace the popular perception of the museum as a “scary, boring, dull place with scary, boring, dull people” with an image that is full of “light and energy” (Int-HMH1, 800–21). Jennifer relates that

I’ve had kids that have said, “I really wasn’t thrilled about having to come here but it was lots of fun and I’d like to come back!” Good. All right! And that’s great. That’s the best. (Int-HMJJ2, 1752–1806)

In the same way, Joan feels that

I want them to have a good time so that they’ll come back. I don’t really care what they learn. I want them to learn that it isn’t scary and that they can relax and have a good time. . . . All learning is a building of blocks and you learn more when you experience it—positive. I’m not saying that you DON’T learn from bad experiences—I think you do—but if you have a bad experience in an art gallery, what’s that going to tell you? “I’m never going back! I don’t like art, and I don’t want ever to have anything to do with it again! [These] people are mean.” (Int-AGJ1, 995–1020)

Dwight and Alice express this in their belief in the “carry-over experience” (Int-NCD2, 195–201). By taking part in a program at the Nature Centre people can see that “[w]e’re part of the environment, we’re not separate, we’re all connected, and what we can do to help the environment can help yourself and your family” (Int-NCA2, 1019–33).

The teacher-participants see in these supporting acts of teaching offered in the limited conditions available to them the potential for future intellectual acts of teaching, even if unfulfilled by them on this occasion. While the teacher-participants would agree with Ansbacher (1999) that just having a good time should not be the end product of a visitor’s lifelong museum-going, they consider their teaching moments to be but one instant in this longer-term experience. If their ego-strengthening acts of teaching are successful, the learner may return to encounter intellectual acts of teaching with the next interpreter, docent, or gallery educator or with the site itself.

From the perspective of the teacher-participants, certain conditions contribute to the success of these supporting acts of teaching. For several, one critical element is the separation of the teaching role from the less pleasant aspects of the schoolteacher’s duties. Thus they hope schoolteachers will retain the “police function” (Schwab 1978, 120) as
disciplinarians (FN-HMJ2, 506; Int-NCA1, 54–65). Gord sees this as fundamental if he is to undertake the more intellectual acts of teaching:

It shouldn’t be my job to discipline somebody else’s class. That’s not really what we’re there for. We’re there to try to impart what we know, to show, to demonstrate, to elicit some response from the kids, to find out what they know. It shouldn’t be to discipline them. (Int-HMG2, 551–57)

As well, the absence of exams or tests relieves the museum teacher from the “examiner function” (Schwab 1978, 121; Int-HMG2, 782–801)

What is often seen by the teacher-participants to be missing in these supporting acts of teaching, however, is a sense of genuine participation by the schoolteacher, a sense that he or she is learning with the students (Schwab 1978, 124). In his program in Chapter Seven, Dwight expresses the way in which he would like the schoolteacher to genuinely participate because it contributes to ego-strengthening of the students that may result in an intellectual act:

I want them to do everything the students do. . . . on all the leading experiences I make sure the teacher’s involved in it as well. . . . They’re going to have an experience. . . . I don’t want the teacher standing at the top looking over there. . . . I want them listening, too. I want them part of the program. I don’t want them to be the disciplinarian. I’m hoping I can achieve that aspect of the program—keeping [the students’] attention—I don’t need them. . . . Their presence is still very important—trying to gain the confidence of the kids—their respect—their involvement. (Int-NCD2, 792–809)

**Intellectual Acts of Museum Teaching**

Intellectual acts of teaching aim to produce awareness of some point by divulging to the learner not only the intent of the lesson but also the reasons behind it (Komisar 1968, 68). This level of teaching helps to better conceptualize Gilman’s (1984) model, discussed in Chapter Two, of the museum’s primary functions—gardant, or keeping; monstrant, or showing; and docent, or teaching (p. 148). Monstrant, or “presentation to the bodily eye,” may be construed as a supporting act of teaching. Docent, or “the sharpening of the spiritual sight” may be seen as an intellectual act.
Because they are predicated on an understanding of museum learning as a lifelong process in which the learner chooses to participate, intellectual and supporting acts of museum teaching imply a constructivist optimist orientation to learning and learners. Intellectual acts of teaching aim to produce awareness rather than particular objects of learning; thus it is not agreement that is sought, but rather convincing reasons, evidence, justification, and conclusion for the learner’s argument. The learner is afforded greater autonomy than is possible in learning as an enterprise. Thereby the challenge for the teacher becomes one not of transmitting knowledge but of creating a meaningful context within which learning can occur (McDaniel et al. 1997, 25). To do that successfully, the reasons, evidence, justification, and conclusion that underlie teaching must be clear not only to the learners but also to the teachers (Green 1964, 32; Kilbourn 1982). This transparency encourages the genuine participation that allows teacher and learner to carry on a “conversation of instruction” (Green 1964, 32).

Apparently, this sense of genuine participation is more apt to be found in working with casual adult visitors with whom the interpreter, docent, or gallery educator can share “similar experiences” or “stories” (Int-NCD2, 250–61; Int-HMJ2, 1677–79; Int-AGJ1, 329). As discussed above in the section on adults as learners, the teacher-participants believe that most casual adult visitors are intrinsically motivated to visit the museum, gallery, or nature centre and are already in a “fit state to learn.” Thus teacher-participants do not attend as closely to the supporting acts of teaching as they would do with students on school tours and instead move to focus on the intellectual acts that help the visitor to “get the point,” “grasp the idea,” “become aware of connections,” and “see the larger view” (Komisar 1968, 79). With other adults, the teacher-participants tend to see themselves as part of a community of learners among whom interpreters, docents, and gallery educators are essentially “on call” to teach as needed. In these instances, teacher-participants see themselves as “co-learners”. They seek first to discover what it is the learner needs or
wants and secondly to create a "setting or environment that is conducive to the pursuit of that information, knowledge or experience" (McDaniel et al. 1997, 25).

Several examples of this "on-call" teaching emerge from the data. For instance, Dwight observes that casual visitors come to visit the Nature Centre with questions in mind and his task is to help them find the answers. As he describes it,

... you have to compromise a little. It's not work here — [the visitor is] enjoying this. It's part of your learning experience. It's the NATURAL way of learning — to ask questions. You should be able to ask questions of me. I should be able to ask questions of you. I'll give you the answers if you're interested in the questions ... I hope they'll come there with some information beforehand and that they'll learn something there, that they'll be willing to give the answers and be enthusiastic but, at the same time, they'll have questions of their own ... so they're the ones that are being curious. ... so it becomes their experience — not your experience. (Int-NCD2, 976-96)

Like Dwight, Alice thinks part of her weekend role is to answer visitors' queries and enter into conversations with them about environmental issues or events in their own lives (Int-NCA2, 123-32).

Similarly, at the Country Art Gallery, Bern thinks visitors have come "with the specific aim of seeing and learning and enjoying" (Int-AGB2, 330-41) to which he responds:

... here is something that interests both of us at that point and collectively we can explore or open up avenues for future exploration that I've never thought about before or that person just inadvertently opened up for me. There's an avenue that I NEVER even thought was possible! And the more I explore, the more, you know, you think that the possibilities are infinite — infinite possibilities there! And you say, "Wow!" (Int-AGB1, 214-24).

Walt agrees:

Why should I get this group who have an hour and impose MY hour on them? If they want to use their hour looking at the paintings in one gallery, then they will say, "This has been a successful time because I have done whatever, I have learned whatever, I saw this group of artists." It doesn't matter if there are four hundred thousand more paintings ... it doesn't matter. This is THEIR hour; they've paid big bucks for this hour. "Dammit, I did. I paid for this tour, I paid for this hour, I want to enjoy this time!" So if they want to look around and look at these things, to talk about them, to come back and ask me about them, then why do I rush them off to the next gallery? (Int-AGW2b, 378-88)
PEDAGOGY AND ANDRAGOGY

In many ways, the teacher-participants' understanding of on-call teaching resembles what is known as andragogy. Originally andragogy was described as “the art and science of helping adults learn,” as opposed to pedagogy, “the art and science of teaching children” (Knowles 1981, 55). Knowles, however, revised those definitions in favour of a distinction based on the assumptions about learning made by the teachers (p. 55). Thus a pedagogical model might in some instances be more useful when working with adults and, similarly, an andragogical model might be more useful in working with children. The following table summarizes some of these assumptions:

Table 4: Comparison of Assumptions of Pedagogy and Andragogy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject of Assumption</th>
<th>Pedagogical Model</th>
<th>Andragogical Model</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Direction of the learning</td>
<td>Teacher-directed learning</td>
<td>Self-directed learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>process</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concept of the learner</td>
<td>Dependent personality</td>
<td>Increasingly self-directed organism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role of learner's experience</td>
<td>To be built on more than used</td>
<td>A rich resource for learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Readiness to learn</td>
<td>Dictated by curriculum [or gallery/tour script]</td>
<td>Develops from life tasks and problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orientation to learning</td>
<td>Subject-centered</td>
<td>Task- or problem-centered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td>External rewards and punishments</td>
<td>Internal incentives, curiosity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: (Knowles 1981, 54)

The use of such a table allows one to move back and forth between the different types of tours as understood by the teacher-participants, without relying on the traditional division between school and adult tours. In practice, as in Alice’s tour at the Nature Centre the teacher-participants sometimes take a more andragogical approach on school tours, while,
as in Bern’s Tour at the Country Art Gallery, others take a more pedagogical approach with adult tours. As demonstrated in Chapter Eight, some teacher-participants themselves use the museum or gallery as a resource when they are engaged in self-directed learning. It is therefore not difficult for them to personally empathize with and seek to provide assistance to self-directed learners (Tough 1967, 76).

A challenge arises at the institutional level, however, when museums, galleries, and nature centres pay lip service to an andragogical model, but assume a pedagogical approach that is more clearly linked to a conceptualization of teaching as enterprise. As Anderson (1995) contends,

... museums are clinging to pedagogic methods in a context which most visitors tend to use in an andragogic manner. ... An environment which is ideally suited to the development of divergent thinking and creative intelligence is often used instead to promote fact-oriented convergent thinking. ... By limiting public participation, a museum deprives itself of a large constituency ... who could have enriched their lives if appropriate educational opportunities had been available and who would have rewarded the institution with their active support. (p. 23–24)

Nevertheless, the very absence of institutional outlines to guide the development of teaching as an intellectual act may have stimulated the teacher-participants to develop their own responses to this level of teaching. Different notions of the tour or program surface in the teacher-participants’ accounts: school tour, “own time”, performance, ritual, and passion. I will discuss these responses in the next section.

TEACHING AS ART AND ARGUMENT

Albeit sometimes intuitively, interpreters, docents and educators recognize and use different levels of teaching that in turn shape their practice. Supporting and intellectual acts may help to explain the differences between what Williams (1984a) calls the “lesson” and the “tour” as noted in Chapter Two. Williams characterizes the tour as a “cultural exposure” (p. 49) or a performance, whereas the lesson is an in-depth exploration of museum objects that provides visitors with a deeply involving learning experience that alters perceptions and
substantially adds to their understanding of the nature of being human (p. 48). She hypothesizes that the teaching required for the lesson and for the tour are radically different. Yet what emerges from this study is that the teacher-participants do not arbitrarily define museum teaching as lesson or tour. Instead, they practise elements of each when and where necessary.

At its best, museum teaching is seen by the teacher-participants as an “incipient art” (Barone 1983, 25), provoking experiences and shaping situations that will yield what the visitor seeks. While much of museum teaching may take place at the level of the supporting acts required for a tour, there is always the potential that the intellectual act of teaching may be required. Hillocks (1999) hypothesizes that this ability to transform “the world in which students act” (p. 122) is pedagogical content knowledge. As he argues, this is the juncture at which teachers differ from scholars:

When teachers provide explanations or representations of subject matter, their knowledge is different only in degree from that of scholars. But when they set up the paths to knowledge in their classroom activities, the knowledge they use is different in kind from that of scholars. (p. 123)

The teacher-participants talk about needing to be ready. Being ready refers to the acquisition of different kinds of knowledge, including subject-matter knowledge, knowledge of the site, and knowledge of these particular learners, in order to be able to teach in whatever way is required by the learners. Shulman (1984), after Fenstermacher (1979) and Green (1971), hypothesizes that the particular judgements, choices, and decisions made amongst these knowledge bases are based upon the outcome of a “practical argument in the teacher’s mind” (Shulman 1984, 193). Yet how does the museum teacher acquire and choose amongst these complex knowledge bases? I address this issue in the next section.
THE WISDOM OF PRACTICE

In Chapter Two I discussed Shulman’s notion of the “wisdom of practice” (1987, 9) or “the maxims that guide (or provide reflective rationalization for) the practices of able teachers” (p. 11). Maxims are neither confirmed by research nor easily demonstrated but are known by teachers to work in practice (p. 11). Because so little of the practical knowledge of museum teaching is drawn from scholarship in either content disciplines or education, much of the conception of teaching embodied in this thesis is derived from collecting, examining, and beginning to codify the emerging wisdom of practice among interpreters, docents, and gallery educators. The families of “principles” (Kilbourn 1998, 37) that I have identified in both chapters Eight and Nine—subject matter, site, learning and teaching—are in effect a classification of the wisdom of practice of these teacher-participants.

Ultimately, however, teachers must transform these sometimes competing principles into action. This involves judgement on the part of the museum teacher, judgement that is also a component of the wisdom of practice. It is this process of pedagogical reasoning and judgement that I documented and discussed in the case studies in chapters Five, Six and Seven, concluding each chapter with a discussion of the common aesthetic and the unique qualities of the teaching/learning encounter as it takes place in the museum, gallery, and nature centre. In this section, I explore how the teacher-participants believe they acquire this wisdom of practice.

Learning to Teach

Teacher-participants themselves understand in different ways preparation and continuing education for teaching in the museum, gallery, or park. (I presented training and development as it was perceived by the education coordinators at each of the Community
In this section I am interested in addressing the question I posed in Chapter Two:

- How do museum teachers believe they learn to teach in the museum, gallery or nature centre?

Unlike the lengthy and intensive instance of docent training cited in Chapter Three, the teacher-participants in this study describe introductory training, the assessment of readiness for practice, induction into practice, and learning during practice (Houle 1980) as more an organic than a linear process. When asked how they learned to teach, the teacher-participants noted three methods: acquisition of information on the subject, observation or "shadowing" of fellow interpreters or docents, and the experience of teaching itself. Again, however, what appears to be particularly important to the development of their understandings are the teacher-participants' practical theories on the nature of learning and the capacity of learners to learn.

Acquisition of Information

The teacher-participants recall pre-service training as an introduction to the content of the site's subject matter. This seems to correspond with the institutional emphasis on teaching as enterprise noted above. Thus Jennifer and Helen perceive their subject-matter training to have been all about information gathering. Training for teaching was "binders and binders and binders of all sorts of information" (Int-HMJ2, 55; Int-HMH1, 751–64) that involved "a LOT of reading" (Int-HMJ1, 342). Similarly, Bern and Joan both recall appreciatively the amount and extent of information about art they received through the docent program (Int-AGJ1, 247–63; Int-AGB1, 633–47).

At the Nature Centre, Alice and Dwight encountered a much different training program. To acquire the knowledge needed for the programs, they were each asked to follow another interpreter or to watch a video of one of the coordinators doing the program (Int-NCD2, 479–86). They were also given a written outline of each program that included...
a few pages of information on the topic. After observing, reading, and taking notes, Dwight created his own set of index cards which he followed until he felt comfortable doing the program (Int-NCD2, 699).

However, the "ever-changing, episodic nature" (Storr 1995) of exhibit and program development in museums, galleries, and parks means that training is ongoing. There are always new exhibits and programs on the horizon, with new information to be acquired. Frequently changing exhibits and programs require constant staff training but leave little time for issues of continuing professional education or discussions of "ways in which professionals try, throughout their active lives of service, to refresh their knowledge and ability and build a sense of collective responsibility to society" (Houle 1980, 5). As with pre-service training, teacher-participants value the information that is continually being presented to them, but do not appear to relate the scholarly conception of a subject matter to the way in which the subject should be taught at their site. The exception to this generalization is Joan, who feels she learned through her training the interpretation of art that now structures her teaching practice. Any other mention of discipline-based literacy, of imparting the structure or the arts and skills needed to do the discipline (Schwab 1964), stems from the teacher-participant's recall of work in the discipline related to his school teaching practice (Gord Int-HMG1, 562–96; Dwight FN-NCD3, 415–19).

On the other hand, information gained through hands-on experience of the work of the institution is seen as far more relevant to the teaching practice of the teacher-participants. At the Community History Museum interpreters recalled opportunities for them to participate in the research, design and installation of exhibits. Not only were they able to themselves research information from books and artifacts, but they were also able to apply and share it in a meaningful way through their teaching:

... going to a museum as a visitor, you look and you see all the labels and whatever—but to learn what actually goes into putting on an exhibit, the little details, the day-to-day, what labelling is all about, the whole idea of collection and how to store it. I've certainly learned a lot from that. (Int-HMJ2, 398–403)
SHADOWING

Observation of veteran interpreters, docents, and educators, or what some teacher-participants call shadowing (Int-HMG2, 456; Int-HMJ2, 500; Int-HMH2, 300), features prominently in their accounts of learning to teach. For example, Gord recalls that he learned the tours at the Community History Museum by

\[\ldots\text{watching what others did. It didn’t take me long to take it up. Once I’d seen how a tour was handled and how it progressed, I only had to shadow people for three or four tours to figure out what I was going to do. (Int-HMG2, 455–59)}\]

However, using the performance metaphor introduced in Chapter Seven, shadowing is limited by the inability of the observer to see what’s happening “in the wings.” (Lortie 1975, 62) The student/visitor is an “onlooker” and therefore not privy to the private reflections and intent of the teacher. Therefore, he or she is not likely to take a reflective stance to teaching (p. 62). This is, Lortie argues, exacerbated by a weakness in the culture of beginning teachers that fails to provide an easy way to tap into the pre-existing body of practical knowledge (p. 73).

The present study suggests that the success of shadowing is also influenced by the teacher-participant’s own conception of learning. When following the tours and programs of others, those who hold an objectivist stance assume a more passive role as learners who are themselves receptacles rather than co-creators of knowledge. Helen’s description of such an apprenticeship of observation is particularly vivid. She felt she knew and was comfortable with the information but was “terrified” of speaking in public (Int-HMH1, 751–64). As a result she did not become involved when she shadowed other tours; she just “stayed at the back and watched” (Int-HMH2, 279–304). At first she taped another interpreter’s presentation and tried to model her own teaching after it. Her nervousness increased in proportion to the time she waited for a tour to be assigned:

I listened to her tape over and over again. And then I would practice it in front of a mirror. Well, another interpreter had mentioned that before HER first tour she used to practice in front of the mirror, so I thought, “Well, that worked, I guess.” And I taped myself and I wrote massive amounts of
notes. And I was so nervous before that first one, and of course they cancelled that first one—which was awful! I had to wait another month before I got my next one. Just do it! I was terrified. I used to dream—I’d wake up. I wouldn’t sleep or I’d wake up having these—these awful dreams where you’re unprepared. (Int-HMH1, 382–407)

Once teaching, she was forced to stick to the museum’s script because she felt she knew little beyond it:

I had been taught THIS script and if it varied from that script, I didn’t know! “We don’t talk about THAT tool. We talk about THIS tool. I can tell you about this one!” (Int-HMH1, 444–51).

Like Helen, Joan was terrified of teaching and learned her practice by “following other people’s experience” (Int-AGJ2, 500–4). She too copied a fellow docent, but later discovered that

... I can’t work the way she does. I DID at the beginning. I almost SOUNDED like her because that was how I learned. (Int-AGJ1, 1033–46)

Joan’s more constructivist notion of learning allowed her to move away from dependence on one mode of presentation and to share practical knowledge with the larger community of practice within the Country Art Gallery. In the next section I examine how teacher-participants move from simple observation and the acquisition of information to learning from their own practice, both alone and with others.

LEARNING FROM EXPERIENCE

Each of the teacher-participants in this study recounted that experience in teaching was a major factor in learning and knowing how to teach in the museum, gallery, or park. Some draw upon experience in school teaching, others compile experience from their work in one institution, and still others have accumulated teaching experiences in a variety of settings.

Notions of experience recall the discussion of Schön’s (1983, 1987) work on reflective practice in Chapter Two. The teacher-participants compare and contrast their expectations or frames with what happens in practice. Although there may be several competing frames, as I have noted at other points in this dissertation, the teacher-
participants’ conceptions of learning and learners’ capacity to learn tend to play a particularly important role in framing the situation. Teacher-participants with a constructivist optimist orientation tend to reflect upon and use their teaching experiences more so than do those with an orientation that is objectivist pessimist. For example, a “surprise” causes a teacher to rethink his or her practice (Schön 1987, 28). But, as Hillocks notes (1999, 129), teachers with a pessimistic conception of learners’ capacity to learn get few surprises from their practice. Not only are their expectations low, but aberrations in performance tend to be attributed to the learners. This is exacerbated when accompanied by an objectivist approach to learning that minimizes learner response and seeks set learning outcomes. In the objectivist conception experience is depicted as something captured in the past and applied to situations in the present, a kind of “mechanical application of pedagogical algorithms” (Kilbourn 1998, 55). On the other hand, constructivist optimists maximize learners’ possibilities for response through supporting and, wherever possible, intellectual acts of teaching. These teachers see themselves as constructing knowledge together with the learners (Hillocks 1999, 131). This ongoing construction of knowledge is applied not only to the content in question but also to the practice of teaching itself. Thus teaching experience is imagined as something ongoing, growing, and expanding, something that demands continuity and interaction with past, present, and future situations.

**Experience as Automatic Skill**

The teacher-participants frequently refer to what they believe to be instinctive or automatic about their teaching as experience. Certainly many moves in teaching are intuitive rather than preplanned, but to succeed they require other, more thoughtful, acts to integrate them into a well-rounded whole (Kilbourn 1998, 54). Otherwise, what teachers see as experience may result in a narrowing of the choice of experiences on which they are able to draw in the future. As Dewey (1963) cautions:

> Any experience is mis-educative that has the effect of arresting or distorting the growth of further experience. An experience may be such as to engender
callousness; it may produce lack of sensitivity and of responsiveness. Then the possibilities of richer experience in the future are restricted. Again, a given experience may increase a person's automatic skill in a particular direction and yet tend to land him in a groove or rut; the effect again is to narrow the field of further experience. (p. 25–26)

For example, on one occasion Gord talks about attaining a "comfort level" through experience in school teaching (Int-HMG2, 1089) so that he feels his teaching now stems from something more "innate" (Int-HMG2, 468) or "intuitive" (Int-HMG2, 565). He says "[A]t this stage of my life I can just reach back and—you know?" (Int-HMG2, 579–607).

At another time, Alice finds it difficult to describe what she does when she is teaching because

It's like driving a car and somebody says, "How come you put the clutch in? When do you put the clutch in and move the gear?" (Int-NCA3, 814–69)

Likewise, Helen finds she is now "comfortable with the gallery space and with the information" and able to "draw on past experience and pull out stuff here and there" (Int-HMH1, 415–26). But, as she says, "I guess a lot of what we do in the museum is the same thing over and over again. So once you've done it once or twice, you're pretty comfortable with the knowledge." (Int-HMH2, 594–96) The account in Chapter Six of Helen's pedagogical reasoning for one tour demonstrates how one "groove," in this case giving more and more esoteric information about the sinking of the Titanic, limits her success with an unusually knowledgeable school group.

At one point or another, most of the teacher-participants encounter challenges in integrating the instinctive moves of teaching into a more deliberative whole. Bern, for example, talks about his experience in terms of the "methods" and the accompanying "ability to improvise" he acquired through school teaching. However, he notes that the learners at the Country Art Gallery require him to use his experience differently. As he says,

Several people have said to me, "Yes, you seem to be very comfortable." First of all, I think I am fortunate insofar that I can draw from my previous teaching the methods I use, the ability to improvise, and also a general understanding if this fails, take another route. . . . If you find that no, this is not working—be aware of that. But my experience there comes in very,
very helpful to me in museum teaching, which I find much easier . . . I find it’s MUCH easier . . . But be aware, it’s not going to be adults alone. And it’s going to be adults and children. And it’s going to be literate and not-so-literate. And it’s going to be the academic will be there or there will also be there those who are not academic. So you’ve got a whole spectrum . . . of understanding here. Whereas in the classroom . . . there’s sort of an invisible line that, hopefully, they all will meet. They would have gone through this understanding to bring them there. (Int-AGB2, 545–67)

In some ways, Jennifer feels that the very nature of museum teaching frustrates her efforts to improve. The two hours that are allotted for a tour leave little time for reflection. And then each tour brings different students so that, despite her best work, she “just never know[s] what to expect! . . . The group tomorrow might be lost again.” (Int-HMJ2, 1273–74) She finds it difficult to refine and use the experience that she does gain from each tour:

I know [learning from teaching] happens and I say it happens, but to actually put my finger on it . . . . Well, when you have a child who seems sullen . . . maybe a few years ago I would have been quite upset. “Why is this person like this?” And just now feeling comfortable that that’s okay. If the person’s going to look like that and they’re going to look miserable, don’t worry about it . . . And again, that’s the maturing process and that’s feeling comfortable in what you are doing. Because when you start out you have that, “Uh-oh, why are they looking that way?” and “They’re not happy here. Is it the program? They don’t like being here?” Whereas now it doesn’t bother me—in that way. ’Cause you’re dealing with teachers—you’re dealing with the public—you learn to deal that way. I can say, “Oh, I’ve learned all sorts of things!” . . . But I can’t put my finger on it! And that’s hard. (Int-HMJ2, 370–89)

Experience that Lives on and Changes

Dewey (1963) contends that the “central problem of education based upon experience is to select the kind of experiences that live fruitfully and creatively in subsequent experiences” (p. 28). It is as true for teachers’ own professional development as it is in designing programs for others, that there must be reflection upon and selection from past and present experiences based upon how creative and fruitful one deems these experiences to be in present and future situations. By way of illustration, Walt talks about “tucking away” techniques from different teaching experiences that work well (Int-AGW2b, 862), building a sort of repertoire from which, on another teaching occasion, he cues up those that suit the group and the situation (Int-AGW2b, 872–91). Each teaching occasion is a unique
response to the problem because “I COVER the same things but I never DO the same thing twice” (Int-AGW2a, 999).

Experience. It’s just experience in everything. . . . If you take an experience of teaching a group and you do that whole thing and certain things “click,” you hold on to them, and certain things don’t. Now, one of the problems is that certain people will take that experience and certain things don’t click, and they’ll throw the whole experience out, instead of taking those things that are positive and happen positively and keeping them, and taking these ones that didn’t and saying, “Why didn’t they work and what can we do to make them work?” (Int-AGW2a, 353–75)

Leinhardt (1988) notes that “some teachers are experts because they retain large amounts of detailed information about the entities with which they work (students, content, management, timing, etc.) and they have a large repertoire of behaviors” (p. 147). Yet Walt’s numerous and wide-ranging teaching experiences in school and non-school settings are not available to many interpreters, docents, and educators. Thus the number and quality of experiences can be as important as the time and inclination to reflect. Certainly Williams (1984b) believed that teaching by the museum teacher and touring by the docent were engendered, in large part, by the number and quality of experiences available to each of them:

A docent conducting one tour per week for 48 weeks a year has 48 experiences per year. A museum teacher teaching 10 classes a week for the same period of time has 480 experiences per year. In terms of working experience, which is usually directly related to professional maturity, a docent of 10 years is comparable to a museum teacher finishing his or her first year of work. (p. 53).

Joan at the Country Art Gallery expresses this same view, reflecting that her move from docent to gallery educator provided her with many more opportunities to reflect, experiment, and reflect again:

I do SO many tours now and they come boom, boom, boom, boom, boom. And in some ways, that’s really good because you’re so practised up and it gives you a chance to try different—to try things that work. You think, “Whoa! I hit on that and that really worked, so I’ll try this again!” Whereas as a docent, you maybe did one tour and then you weren’t scheduled for that tour again for several weeks. And so, by then, you’d sort of forgotten the circumstance. (Int-AGJ2, 53–62)
Coupled with her continued reflective practice, Joan feels the greater breadth of experience allowed her to step back from and look more critically at her work:

Because . . . I can see what I’m doing. And . . . maybe in some ways it makes you a little more analytical. Because if they’re not paying attention, it’s not so much that they don’t like me personally, it’s that they don’t like something that I’m doing or that they may just not want to be there in general. But that’s okay, there are ways to help deal with that as well. So you can look at it and say, “Well, that wasn’t very successful, was it?” But it’s not, “Gee, I’m a failure at this” — what I WAS doing . . . I think you just have to distance yourself a little bit from it. (Int-AGJ2, 173–89)

As a result, Joan sees a new focus and intensity in her teaching:

I don’t know whether I’m doing it more often or because I’m aware that I am paid and I am a “professional” — I find that I tend to turn off everything else when I go there. . . . I go there and I’m there to do a job, and anything else that’s in my life, I totally ignore. (Int-AGJ2, 2328–80)

Her focus and intensity are markedly similar to what Csikszentmihalyi (1990) describes as the “flow state”:

Attention is focused and concentration is so intense that there is no attention left over to think about anything irrelevant or to worry about problems. In the flow state, a person is unaware of fatigue and the passing of time; hours pass by in what seem like minutes. This depth of involvement is enjoyable and intrinsically rewarding. (Csikszentmihalyi and Hermanson 1995b, 70)

Overall, Joan wonders if these feelings of heightened sensitivity, enjoyment, and control have motivated her to try new and different ways of teaching that enabled the development of a repertoire of strategies (Int-AGJ2, 2328–80).

At the same time, however, Joan believes strongly that her teaching practice is grounded in her past experiences within the docent group. Research on professional development in school teaching suggests that “relationships that teachers form with colleagues in their departments or in subject-matter organizations matter most in terms of professional development; teachers need colleagues to provide a professional community in which to learn and develop” (Grossman and Stodolsky 1994, 182). In the next section I will explore the meaning that such relationships have for the teacher-participants in terms of how they believe they learned how to teach in the museum, gallery and nature centre.
Most of the teacher-participants believe they learned, at least in part, how to teach or how to improve their teaching at the museum, gallery, or nature centre through interactions with fellow interpreters, docents, or educators. Although they did not use the term, I refer to this as a community of practice. As noted in Chapter One, members of a community of practice share knowledge and accumulated wisdom. The initiate learns from a “richly diverse field of actors and . . . other forms of relationships of participation” (Lave and Wenger 1991, 56). Within this learning community, members provide specialist advice and mentoring to unskilled newcomers (Anderson 1995). Communities of practice help the teacher-participants frame (Schön 1983; Barnes 1992) or “select the kind of experiences that live fruitfully and creatively in subsequent experiences” (Dewey 1938/1963, 38) by providing models of teaching. The community of practice is influenced by the hierarchical, professional, and membership controls and marginalization encountered by teacher-participants as discussed in Chapter Eight, and to which I will refer again below.

To reiterate, Joan believes that her teaching practice is grounded in her experiences within the docent group. She recalls there a shared experience of gallery teaching that everyone could and did discuss (Int-AGJ1, 692–700). It was especially important for “new people doing tours to have that, because they’re less certain of what is [typical]” (Int-AGJ1, 934–41). In many ways, this kind of discussion expanded the mutual “repertoire” (Shulman 1985, 15) of the new docents. Furthermore, Joan feels that an important part of being a member of the community is to assume a mentorship role in relation to new docent/educators. Joan sees herself as “just trying to make life a little easier for them” (Int-AGJ2, 1323). On each of the three tours I observed with her, there was a trainee either following the tour or presenting a part of it. In this excerpt, she talks to Gloria, a new educator, after she has presented a segment of the tour. Note how Joan makes evident her decision-making process:

Once groups have spread out around the gallery, Gloria approaches Joan and asks her how she did.
JOAN: You did well, that’s not an easy [painting]. You discussed anatomy and that’s not easy.

GLORIA: I find the best way is to be straightforward.

JOAN: Do you want to be part of the next exercise?

GLORIA: Okay.

Joan and Gloria talk about the other works of art in this gallery.

JOAN: This one is hard to do [gesturing at painting], very controversial . . .

Joan and Gloria discuss how they might approach it with this group.

JOAN: [to Gloria and I] Let’s keep doing it this way. They [the other half of the group] did analysis. We did colour/shape/texture. I like analysis in landscape but not in here. (FN-AGJ2, 210–23)

It is important, however, to note that what is valued within one community of practice may not be valued in another. As I have discussed in Chapter Eight, those who feel marginalized within their institution may choose to reject the resident community’s practice and, therefore, it does not frame their experiences. Walt, for example, feels that the Country Art Gallery provides not a community of practice but a “training ground.” As he says,

You continue to grow only if you’re allowed to try those dynamic things that new people can try. If you are not allowed to try them, then you start doing these things, you get frustrated, then you pack it in and you go someplace else. (Int-AGW2b, 1104–29)

A community of practice, Walt argues, only develops when individual docents or educators are confident in their own skills of “thinking and doing” (Int-AGW2a, 412). They may then adapt these experiences to new situations: “[Y]ou take all these background experiences you have had, and when this situation arises you draw on those things that say why did this happen, and follow it” (Int-AGW2a, 468–71). These experiences can be further enhanced by sharing them with other docents in a collegial fashion (Int-AGW2b, 1017), by walking and doing and talking with one another (Int-AGW2b, 1030). Unlike Joan, Walt feels that this sharing, social aspect is missing from the Country Art Gallery’s training and development program (Int-AGW2b, 92–110). It doesn’t have a “built-in
reinforcer of new ideas and new things" (Int-AGW2a, 481-99) and, therefore, docents leave because “they don’t feel they’re learning anymore” (Int-AGW2b, 1275).

Although staff at the Nature Centre are infrequently together as a group, during busy seasons there may be twelve or thirteen staff members on site at one time thus allowing them to nurture their sense of themselves as a professional group. Alice finds the opportunity to exchange ideas invigorating and worth the “chaos” that such a busy time means to the centre (FN-NCA1, 56 text insert). Generally, a large school group of sixty or so students will be divided into three groups, each with their own interpreter, each of whom will be doing the same program. In order to avoid all of them being in the same place at the same time, interpreters negotiate amongst themselves to determine issues of trail use and timing—who goes where and when. Alice says, “We just quickly work those things out” (Int-NCA2, 567–621). With certain of the programs, two or more interpreters are co-leaders of the group. Alice enjoys these opportunities to communicate and figure things out with other interpreters, or sometimes just to improvise together as they go along (Int-NCA2, 654–88).

Dwight, too, feels that the critical element in learning to teach at the Nature Centre was and is the sharing of knowledge and experience amongst the interpreters:

Some of the teachers there are really very rich. . . . Each of them brings different strengths to the program. Each of us is different. That’s why it’s so good when you share. “How did you do that?” And you ask, “Well, why does it work?” “Well, it works with me because I did this.” “Well, I’ll try that too.” And you get the opportunity to do that—that sharing; whereas in a classroom you’re more isolated. . . . [You may be] sharing with your department . . . but you’re usually teaching different things there. (Int-NCD2, 438–48)

He finds that he needs stimulation from his colleagues to revisit some of the bases for his teaching. As he says, “Very often you forget all those reasons for doing things, they come so naturally.” (Int-NCD2, 1147–54)

Considering the perceived marginalization discussed in Chapter Eight, it should not be surprising that the teacher-participants often undertake their own professional development, both individually and in groups, apart from the formal support of the
institutions in which they work. Museum teaching is easily accessible for observation, so most teacher-participants visit other museums and galleries to take part in ad hoc adult tours as a way to "pick up something which I can use here in my tours, expand my knowledge" (Int-AGB1, 817–47). Whenever possible, Alice takes the opportunity to observe school groups "from the inside" because she wants to "see where they’re coming from" (Int-NCA2, 381–423). She particularly enjoys a chance to see the "interaction between the students and teacher or the interpreter and . . . hear what they’re talking about at the back of the group!" (Int-NCA2, 381–423). However, Alice also comes forward and interacts with interpreters at other sites as she would with her own colleagues, thus broadening her community of practice. On the hike described below, for example, she enters into a collegial relationship with the interpreter. As Alice says, with a chuckle, "[We] helped each other out. She didn’t know as many flowers as I did, but that was okay." (Int-NCA2, 496–509).

I was the only one on the hike for the wildflowers in the spring. And early on I mentioned to the [interpreter] where I worked. And I did know a fair bit more about the wildflowers, but we were sort of helping each other. But she had some neat ideas. She said, "Oh, I brought along the path all these books—all these identification books. What I usually do, if I have quite a few people, I just give out the books to everybody." And I thought, "Oh, this is interesting!" Something I wouldn’t think with adults, ’cause this is an adult public hike. It’s not a school group. And just have them really involved. (Int-NCA2, 381–423)

Likewise, Jennifer and other interpreters at the Community History Museum have arranged their own trips to observe staff at other sites, "just to learn from them, what they do and how they deliver their information" (Int-HMJ2, 49–81). Their richest experience was one in which they were able to take part in an archaeological dig with site staff. The hands-on experience enabled them to go back to the archaeological exhibit in the museum and talk to kids about "what WE had to do" (Int-HMJ2, 49–81). Jennifer also finds it helpful to speak with the other interpreters about their teaching practice. Once every two months, she says, there is a formal gathering at which they are able to discuss what is and isn’t working with various tours and may make recommendations for change to the
Education Coordinator (Int-HMJ2, 299-305). "The Education Coordinator’s very good at recognizing that we are sort of the ‘front-line troops,’” says Jennifer, “and if something just doesn’t work, there’s no sense in doing it.” (Int-HMJ2, 1655-64) Most frequently, participating interpreters will just join together in a post-mortem discussion after the tour (Int-HMJ2, 1261):

"Well, that didn’t quite work. What can we do there that would make a difference?" . . . when we’re talking amongst ourselves—the interpreters—and we’re all finding, “Oh yeah, I found the same thing with that one” . . . "Okay, any suggestions on what we can do?" Or you can talk to the Education Coordinator. And again, it’s very flexible. So that if something works for somebody [else] we’re certainly willing to or enabled to incorporate that. (Int-HMJ2, 1241-52)

Like Joan, Jennifer works hard individually to integrate her experiences teaching at the Community History Museum into a body of knowledge that is shared among the interpreters.

For the most part, however, the teacher-participants who work in a setting where they feel marginalized seem less inclined to spend time learning together. Therefore there are fewer opportunities for the interpreters as a group to construct an alternative frame amongst themselves—to think like interpreters. As Gord says, “I think we all do our own thing” (Int-HMG2, 425-47). Time constraints and personal inhibitions about being in someone else’s teaching space are factors:

We’re from [different towns]. We’re from all over the place, so we don’t really operate as a sort of a history department in a school. Even then, as a department head I did get a chance to get in and see people and I liked to encourage people to watch other people teach. This is one of the things you try to encourage, BUT it seldom happens. People are inhibited. They don’t want to go into somebody else’s classroom. They don’t really want somebody else in their [classroom]. And so you try to create an open environment where this sort of thing can take place but it doesn’t ensure that it’s going to take place. And, certainly, in [the Community History Museum] the only way it’s going to take place is if you shadow somebody and see how their tour runs. You know, I likely won’t do any more shadowing because once I’ve shadowed, I’ve shadowed, and that’s it. (Int-HMG2, 579-95)

As a part-time worker with many other demands on her time, Helen is simply unable to spend much time communicating her dilemmas and testing them against her fellow
interpreters to the extent that new comprehensions of the purpose of museum teaching may be achieved. And finally, Bern simply feels he should make room for the new and younger docents:

I've been out of touch with seminars, you know. What I do there when we discuss new things, I try to be very quiet and let the younger ones [take part]. . . . They say, “Oh, you know it. You know it all.” And I don’t know it all, but I’m trying to give them the opportunity that they also make a contribution and I should not dominate the situation. (Int-AGB2, 1394–1404)

By not reflecting on the constraints and possibilities of their own organizational settings these teacher-participants are excluded from what Schön (1987) terms the “phenomenology of practice.” Not only are they limited in the ways in which they “frame and shape their own worlds”, as discussed in Chapter One, but they are also bound by their inability to see and discuss “what happens when people with similar and different ways of framing reality come into collision” (p. 322).

This failure to reflect on shared practice is as true within the broader community of practice that exists between institutions as it is within each individual setting. The institutions in this study may support in principle the work of international, federal, provincial, and local organizations interested in museum education and interpretation. However, little, if any, of that information had been made available to the teacher-participants in this study. Certain individuals in the study moved in and out of larger communities of practice such as provincial associations of either museum workers (Gord, Helen) or natural and cultural interpreters (Alice) but they were not encouraged to apply these experiences to their day-to-day work. Yet without access to the broader world of teaching practice in non-school settings, interpreters, docents, and educators are “trapped in a solipsistic universe in which only their own experiences [are] potentially educative” (Shulman 1998, 521).
SUMMARY

In this chapter I have explored the teacher-participants’ understandings of learners and learning and of teachers and teaching. The findings suggest that the teacher-participants’ conceptions of learning and learners’ capacity to learn are critical to the conceptualization and development of their own teaching practice. Categorized as objectivist/constructivist and pessimist/optimist, these relatively simple orientations to learning and learners influence not only the teacher-participants’ approach to teaching others, but also the ways in which they apply their own training and continuing professional education as museum teachers. Furthermore, the teacher-participants’ understandings are framed by often implicit and sometimes competing institutional conceptions of learning and learners as demonstrated by tour outlines and training programs for museum teachers. When viewed alongside the teacher-participants’ understandings of subject matter and site as discussed in Chapter Eight, these findings help to conceptualize the complexity of teaching in the museum, gallery and nature centre as discussed in the next chapter.
CHAPTER TEN

DISCUSSION AND REFLECTIONS ON THE STUDY

In this chapter I want to address directly the problem I set at the beginning of this thesis, which was to document and analyze the nature and experience of teaching within the museum setting from the perspective of the teacher. In order to do this I will first present a brief review of the aims, questions, methodology, and major findings of the study. This is followed by my reflections on the nature of pedagogical content knowledge within museum teaching. Next I discuss the significance of my findings for three areas of study: (1) the complexity of teaching, (2) the development of a curriculum of training and continuing professional development for both museum teachers and museum educators, and (3) an understanding of teaching beyond its connotation as a phenomenon of schooling. I conclude the chapter with questions for future study on teachers and teaching in the museum.

REVIEW OF AIMS AND QUESTIONS OF THE STUDY

In undertaking this study I worked closely with eight teacher-participants over a period of one year in three “museum” settings: a community history museum, an art gallery, and a nature centre. To characterize these sites as museums, I used the definition currently in use by the Canadian Museums Association (2001):

A non-profit, permanent establishment, exempt from federal and provincial income taxes, open to the public at regular hours and administered in the public interest for the purpose of collecting and preserving, studying, interpreting, assembling and exhibiting to the public for its instruction and enjoyment, objects and specimens of cultural value, including artistic,
scientific (whether animate or inanimate), historical and technological material. (CMA 2001)

Using a form of "purposeful sampling," I selected sites from which I felt the most information could be obtained (Patton 1990, 159). In choosing the three sites I looked for a representation of different discipline bases and the existence of an active on-site teaching program using museum teachers. Once the sites were selected, museum teachers were invited to volunteer to participate in the study. I asked that those interested consider themselves to be experienced museum teachers who conducted tours on a regular basis. As well, teacher-participants had to be comfortable not only with being observed but also with reflecting upon their own practice. The pseudonyms of the eight teacher-participants in the study were Bern, Joan, and Walt at the Country Art Gallery, Alice and Dwight at the Nature Centre, and Gord, Helen, and Jennifer at the Community History Museum.

In doing this qualitative research I utilized methods of participant-observation, conversational interviews, and reflective practice. Findings were corroborated through the design of the study itself. Different participants, different tours, and different settings provided multiple sources of data, coupled with the multiple methods of research noted above. This corroboration was further enriched by the amount of time spent on site and with the teacher-participants. Over the course of the study I was a participant-observer in a total of thirty tours. I also conducted twenty-two in-depth interviews with teacher-participants, as well as additional meetings with a limited selection of other education staff members at the three sites. Field notes, interviews, and interpretive accounts were given to the teacher-participants involved to check for errors and plausibility. The rich description that contributes to plausibility for both participants and readers also threatens the anonymity of the teacher-participants, and so this reference check was particularly important.

I used Schwab's (1978) model of the curricular commonplaces to explore the broad boundaries of subject matter, milieu, learners and learning, and teachers and teaching as expressed in the literature related to museum, galleries and parks. This study then concentrated on the commonplace of teachers and teaching. For this analysis I employed
Shulman's (1987) discussion of the four knowledge bases essential for teaching (scholarship in content disciplines, educational materials and structures, formal educational scholarship, and the wisdom of practice) together with his model of pedagogical reasoning and action. With these as guidelines, I compared and contrasted themes and categories both within and across cases until regularities emerged. Progressive focusing led to certain assertions about each case and across all three cases. At different points in my research, I offered for scrutiny and feedback the themes and categories I had developed to my peers in both museum education and in schoolteacher development. I also compared the themes and categories against my own past experiences as a museum teacher. The cases were constructed from much larger sources of data; nevertheless, they offer an insight into what it means to teach in the museum that has been missing from the literature.

The study reported here has four critical questions, each of which will be addressed in the following sections:

Question 1: What do museum teachers know?
Question 2: How do museum teachers conceptualize teaching in the museum?
Question 3: What reasoning lies behind museum teaching?
Question 4: How do museum teachers believe they learn to teach in museums?

REVIEW OF MAJOR FINDINGS

**Question 1: What Do Museum Teachers Know?**

In the literature cited in Chapter Two, museum teachers generally were thought to be unable to provide a coherent explanation of the nature and source of their own teaching and learning processes (Eisner and Dobbs 1986; Worts 1990; Anderson 1995). Duthie's (1990) study challenged this understanding by showing that docents working in the two art
museums in her study did hold a coherent body of knowledge that they saw as emanating from their practice but this practical knowledge was incompatible with the formal knowledge of the institution. The present study with teacher-participants Alice, Dwight, Bern, Joan, Walt, Gord, Helen, and Jennifer extends these findings in a number of directions.

Overall, the findings of this study suggest that the teacher-participants do have a relatively coherent knowledge base that they use to teach in the museum, gallery, or park, which is related to Shulman’s (1987) categories—scholarship in content disciplines, educational materials and structures, formal educational scholarship, and the wisdom of practice. These knowledge bases do not exist as separate categories of knowledge but interact with one another, as Hillocks (1999) found in his study of community college teachers. Although few of the teacher-participants refer to standard theories in any of the categories it is clear that underlying their work are what amount to “practical theories” that enable them to order their teaching activities. These practical theories are an essential component of the “wisdom of practice” (Shulman 1987, 11) formed from teaching in the museums, gallery, and nature centre. What appear equally important for the teacher-participants are the conceptual frameworks that guide them amongst these sometimes competing practical theories. These conceptual frameworks appear to originate from the institution, the community of practice, and the teacher-participants’ own experience. I will return to this topic after having reviewed the categories of museum teacher understandings as they emerged from the study.

Scholarship in Content Disciplines

To review briefly, Shulman (1987) proposes that there are two foundations for the knowledge of scholarship in content disciplines. First, the teacher must know the accumulated literature and studies in the content area together with the critical literature. Second, she or he must also know the philosophical scholarship on the nature of
knowledge in these fields. Three elements are seen to be critical to discipline-based understanding: (1) content knowledge, or the factual knowledge, organizing principles, and central concepts of the discipline, (2) substantive knowledge, or the explanatory frameworks that are used both to guide inquiry in the field and to make sense of it, and (3) syntactic knowledge, or the ways in which new knowledge is brought into the field (Schwab 1964; Grossman et al. 1989).

The present study suggests that the museum, gallery and nature centre in this study are multidisciplinary sites not only in terms of the representation of disciplines such as art, history, and science, but also in terms of the inclusion of museology or museum studies as a kind of secondary discipline. Thus the teacher-participants from these sites teach not one but many subjects and it is difficult to be well-versed and knowledgeable in them all. Furthermore, for those teacher-participants who come to the museum, gallery, or nature centre with different disciplinary perspectives than those of the site, their old ways of thinking often act as a sieve through which new information is filtered (Wilson and Wineburg 1988).

In many ways, the teaching practice of the teacher-participants in this study resembles that of elementary-school teachers. Responsible for a wide variety of tours and programs, albeit at a basic level, the teacher-participants cover a range of topics comparable in scope to the subjects covered by the elementary schoolteacher. Like elementary schoolteachers, museum teachers have the potential to model the different ways of knowing in the disciplines so that even very young students may come to appreciate that there are different perspectives from which to view the world (Gardner and Boix-Mansilla 1994). Some teacher-participants in the study do see themselves acting as models in terms of how to “do” the discipline. This is particularly evident in the cases of Dwight and Gord, both former high-school teachers in the same subjects as they now teach in the nature centre and history museum, respectively. However, on the whole, the teacher-participants do not consider themselves to be “authorities” (Peters 1969, 239) in what I had supposed to be the
discipline base of the institutions: art, science, and history. Instead, they tend to focus on the acquisition and dissemination of content information and appear unconcerned with the philosophical foundations of the disciplines in which they are working.

Likewise, the teacher-participants do not see themselves as authorities in the discipline of museology. Overall, they are not “museum literate” in terms of their “genuine and full . . . access to the museum by virtue of mastery of the language of museum objects and familiarity with the museum as an institution” (Stapp 1984, 3). As such, rather than seeing their role as one of working with learners to critically question, interpret, and analyze museums, galleries, and nature centres, the teacher-participants strive to help learners “experience” the setting as it is presented to them. Even those teacher-participants who have taken courses in museology do not apply this knowledge to their teaching, despite their assertion that the courses contributed to their personal ways of knowing the museum. Similarly, other teacher-participants, without museological training, had had very positive individual and social experiences of museum-going but tended not to apply these understandings to their teaching practice.

Lack of authority in terms of the disciplinary perspectives of subject matter(s) and museums appears to be an important issue in the training and development of museum teachers. Concepts of subject matter and museology that are intuitive or implicit in the teaching practice of the teacher-participants are not available to them for discussion with others. Neither, then, are the teacher-participants generally able to identify and discuss the unique qualities of the museum situation that link the subject and the site in an interdisciplinary manner. This inability or unwillingness to assert authority in either subject matter or museology tends to exclude the teacher-participants from the broader communities of practice in the museum, a point to which I will return in the next section.
In this second knowledge base, Shulman hypothesizes that the teacher must “know the territory” of his or her teaching—the materials, institutions, organizations and mechanisms that form not only the “tools of the trade” but also the context for it (1987, 10). Recently, Shulman has emphasized the importance of this knowledge base, saying, “It may well be that changing the context in which one teaches may have more influence on beliefs and practices than any individual interventions can hope to accomplish.” (Hillocks 1999, x)

The findings of the present study support the importance of context to museum teaching practice in terms of both the physical impact of the setting and how site-specific organizations and mechanisms influence those who work within them. The teacher-participants take a somewhat ambivalent approach to the institutions in which they work. Although they tend to see their own institutions from an insider’s point of view (Falk and Dierking 1992, 83), at the same time they maintain a visitor’s approach to museum, gallery, or park settings overall. Addressing first the insider’s perspective, the teacher-participants do attend to certain qualities associated with the institutions. Yet these qualities tend to be site-specific and are not applied by teacher-participants to their general understandings of museums, galleries, or parks. Broadly put, at the Nature Centre the site is seen as a microcosm of the whole environment rather than an artificially constructed milieu; at the Community History Museum the museum is seen as a series of spaces containing artifacts; and, at the Country Art Gallery, the gallery is seen as a container for works of art. The kinds of qualities to which the teacher-participants attend when they are teaching are influenced by their image of what a museum, gallery, or nature centre is and, in turn, influence their conception of it. Qualities that emerge from teaching-participants’ thinking about their sites are issues of space, time, and the tools of the trade that are, for them, art, artifacts, and the natural world. When they are teaching, most of the teacher-participants conceptualize their sites as busy and potentially confusing places of work.
However, these perceptions are complicated by the past experiences of the teacher-participants as visitors and the personal uses to which they put the museum, gallery or nature centre on a continuing basis. As noted in Chapter Eight, these personal uses may be gender-related. For example, teacher-participants Alice, Joan, Jennifer and Helen speak of museum or gallery visiting and the use of the outdoors as a social experience with family members and other people. On the other hand, Dwight, Gord, Bern, and Walt tend to use the museum or gallery as a resource for self-directed learning. In these respects, the teacher-participants make meaning of the setting through the same "continually shifting interaction among personal, social, and physical contexts" as does any other museum visitor (Falk and Dierking 2000, 107). Yet how the teacher-participants frame the museum and its collections when they are visitors is often inconsistent with the way they conceptualize and use these sites when they teach. This inconsistency between life and work experiences makes it difficult for the teacher-participants to act "in the situation" (Brown et al. 1989, 33). When this happens their teaching feels, for them, less "authentic" (p. 35).

The expectation in the literature, as discussed in Chapter Two, is that museum teachers will develop authority in the discipline and authenticity at the site by joining in "the community of practice we call the museum" (Falk and Dierking 2000, 107). Docents are seen to learn to teach in the museum as "they increasingly understand the activities and goals of other members of the [museum] community, including curators, exhibit designers and educators" (Abu-Shumays and Leinhardt 2000). In the present study, however, the teacher-participants ordinarily do not perceive themselves to be part of a broader community of practice. Instead, what they experience seems more in keeping with what Ball (1987) defines as "institutional controls"—hierarchical, professional, and membership control. These controls, often implicit, set standards and promote certain styles of teaching.

Overall, however, what the majority of the teacher-participants in this study express are feelings of marginalization with respect to both other museums workers within the
institution and those within the broader museum community. As discussed in Chapter One, the traditionally hierarchical organization of museums and galleries is based on access to collections and collections research (Anderson 1995, 27). The teacher-participants feel excluded from power by virtue of their distance from the “real” work of the museum. Their teaching expertise is seen to be neither acknowledged nor rewarded by others in the institution.

This mental distance from the seats of power is exacerbated by the physical separation of the teacher-participants from both other museum workers and from the site itself. The teacher-participants tend to see themselves as entrepreneurs. Whether they are contract staff or volunteers, their jobs as interpreters, docents, or even gallery educator require them to deliver programs or tours only on an as-needed basis. Thus teacher-participants come in to work at the site—one, two, or at most three times a week—and then go home. To the teacher-participants it feels as if they are “just using corners of the building” (FN-HMJ3, 316). For these teacher-participants, this job is one of many enterprises that they undertake. Without exception, all of those in this study hold other part-time jobs, run small businesses or are actively engaged in other volunteer activities. For many, museum teaching is just “not much of a livelihood” (Int-HMH1, 1104–7).

**Formal Educational Scholarship**

Shulman describes the knowledge base for formal educational scholarship as the philosophical, critical, and empirical literature that informs the goals, visions and dreams of teachers in addition to the empirical study of teaching effectiveness that provides general teaching principles (Shulman 1987, 10–11). Its source is the scholarly literature devoted to understanding the processes of schooling, teaching, and learning. This literature includes not only the findings and methods of empirical research in the areas of teaching, learning, and human development, but also the normative, philosophical, and ethical foundations of education (p. 10).
Learners and Learning

In Chapter One I cited several theories of learning in museums. The teacher-participants were not generally cognizant of this museum literature and only rarely referred to more general educational theories of learning and teaching. Instead, as Hillocks (1999) found in his study of community college teachers, underlying their work are relatively simple theories that enable them to order their teaching activities. Amongst the teacher-participants in this study, two basic orientations to learning emerged: constructivist and objectivist. Similarly, two basic orientations to learners and their capacity to learn were noted: optimist and pessimist.

Turning first to objectivist and constructivist orientations to learning, the objectivists in the study conceive of knowledge as existing independently of the people who know it. In this orientation, museum teachers are understood to have full responsibility for the learning processes while the museum learner is assigned a more passive role as a repository of knowledge. Museum education is seen as more a product than a process. On the other hand, the constructivists amongst the teacher-participants believe that the museum learner needs to be engaged in the purposive reconstruction of the knowledge offered. Museum education is perceived to be the “process of how to get there . . . how they can explore . . . and come to their own conclusions” rather than a predefined outcome (Int-NCA2, 482–86). Learning stems from a long-term relationship between teacher and learner (Int-AGJ2, 126; Int-AGB2, 1115–45). Equally important to their teaching is the teacher-participants’ belief in the learners’ capacity to learn. If learning is defined as a long-term phenomenon then museum learners cannot be seen to learn within the one- or two-hour time span of their visit. Therefore, because they cannot be there to see learning take hold and develop, the teacher-participants have to be “optimistic” (Int-NCD2, 314) about the capacity of learners to learn in the long-term.

Although Anderson (1995) contends that “museums are clinging to pedagogic methods in a context which most visitors tend to use in an andragogic manner” (p. 23-24),
the findings of this study suggest that teacher-participants have an implicit understanding of an andragogic approach. The teacher-participants see the adult learner as self-directed and driven by internal motivation and curiosity, which is often the result of specific tasks or problems set by the learner (Knowles 1981, 54). The teacher-participants tend to see learning as a lifelong process associated with enjoyment. They work hard to get students to return to the museum, gallery, and park on their own, where there is the potential for student to become self-directed learner. As a result, they tend to be constructivist optimists with regard to learning and learners in the museum. What this means for their conceptualization of teaching I address in the next section.

**Question 2: How Do Teacher-Participants Conceptualize Teaching in the Museum?**

**Teachers and Teaching**

Understandings of subject matter, museology, and site all contribute to the teacher-participants’ conceptions of the role of teachers and teaching in the museum, gallery, and nature centre. However, conceptions of learning and the capacity of the learner to learn seem to be particularly important to the understanding and development of teaching. I find useful to this discussion Komisar’s (1968) three levels of teaching: (1) teaching as occupation, (2) teaching as enterprise, and (3) teaching as supporting and intellectual acts (p. 68). To review briefly, according to Komisar, the occupational level names an activity habitually engaged in. The teaching-as-enterprise level addresses teaching as an activity in which one engages with an intent to produce learning. The third level, intellectual and supporting acts of teaching, aims to produce awareness of some point by divulging to the learner not only the intent of the lesson but also the reasons behind it.
Museum Teaching as Occupation

As noted above and in Chapter Nine, Komisar's categories help organize the themes and categories that emerged from the data. For example, the teacher-participants reported that their titles at the respective sites are labels assigned by the institution or by members of the general public to activities undertaken by the teacher-participants. These titles reflect an understanding of teaching at the level of an occupation. The title given by the Nature Centre to the teacher-participants is “educational assistant,” but the Education Coordinator refers to them as “nature interpreters” and in site publications they are called “naturalists.” There was little in the data to suggest that any particular thought was given to the assignment of these titles by institutions, other than to differentiate paid and unpaid staff. This casual attitude to the creation and use of titles reflects the “categorical miasma” (Ekos 1989) of the broader museum education field.

Museum Teaching as Enterprise

In speaking of their own practice, the teacher-participants talk more about the enterprise of teaching, or the activities in which one engages with an intent to produce learning (Komisar 1968, 72). As discussed in Chapter Nine, teaching as enterprise implies the learning of specific information or processes and lends itself to concerns about accountability and tests of teaching effectiveness. The teaching-as-enterprise orientation is often promoted and reinforced by the institutions for which the teacher-participants in this study work or volunteer, particularly with regard to school tours and programs. As a result, the teacher-participants themselves think a great deal about what an individual learns as a consequence of visiting the museum. Despite the overall constructivist optimistic orientation to learning taken by most of the teacher-participants, they still look for ways to evaluate the effectiveness of their teaching and frequently focus on the completion of tasks that will demonstrate that learners have garnered specific information or processes. In this, traditional indicators are not always useful. As Gord says, “in a museum you’re not going
to FAIL any kid" (Int-HMG2, 782–801). Teacher-participants at the Community History Museum, in particular, seem concerned with the completion of worksheets and programs so that students and their teachers will feel they have come away with something of value. This concern for value competes with a sense that students are also visitors who should be able to have fun at the museum. These discussions identify that teacher-participants are aware of the often "paradoxical and conflicting" (Duthie 1990, 1) activities clumped under the name of teaching in museums, galleries, and parks.

**The Supporting Acts of Museum Teaching**

For the most part, however, what the teacher-participants see themselves doing are the **supporting acts** of teaching. Supporting acts of teaching include both those intended to contribute to the production of learning (Komisar 1968, 75) and those that are ego-strengthening for the learner such as helping to reduce anxiety, arouse interest, and focus attention (p. 75). In keeping with their constructivist optimistic orientation to learning as a long-term relationship, teacher-participants see their practice as 'supporting' what the schoolteacher does in the classroom before and after the visit.

As for ego-strengthening supporting acts, the teacher-participants attend closely to the qualities of visitor anxiety, interest, and attention as seen in the discussions of pedagogical reasoning in chapters Five, Six, and Seven. They recognize that sometimes they are better able to perform these acts than is the schoolteacher. Often the teacher-participants content themselves with the fulfilment of these ego-strengthening acts of teaching, as demonstrated by the importance assigned to the learners' enjoyment and comfort in the setting.

The teacher-participants see in these supporting acts of teaching the potential for future **intellectual acts** of teaching, even if that potential is unfulfilled by them on this occasion. While the teacher-participants would agree with Ansbacher (1999) that just having a good time should not be the end product of a visitor's lifelong museum-going,
they consider their teaching moments to be but one element of this longer-term experience. If their ego-strengthening acts of teaching are successful, the learner may return to encounter intellectual acts of teaching with the next interpreter, docent, or gallery educator.

*Intellectual Acts of Museum Teaching*

Intellectual acts of teaching aim to produce awareness of some point by divulging to the learner not only the intent of the lesson but also the reasons behind it (Komisar 1968, 68). Because they are predicated on an understanding of museum learning as a lifelong process in which the learner chooses to participate, intellectual and supporting acts of museum teaching imply a constructivist optimist orientation to learning and learners. Intellectual acts of teaching aim to produce awareness rather than particular products of learning, and thus it is not agreement that is sought, but rather, convincing reasons, evidence, justification, and conclusion for the learner’s argument. Thereby the learner is afforded greater autonomy than is possible in learning as enterprise. The challenge for the teacher becomes one not of transmitting knowledge but of creating a meaningful context within which learning can occur (McDaniel et al. 1997, 25). To do that successfully, the reasons, evidence, justification, and conclusion that underlie teaching must be clear not only to the learners but also to the teachers (Green 1964, 32; Kilbourn 1982). This transparency encourages the genuine participation that allows teacher and learner to carry on a “conversation of instruction” (Green 1964, 32).

Apparently, this sense of genuine participation is more apt to be found in working with casual adult visitors with whom the interpreter, docent or gallery educator can share similar experiences and “stories” (Int-NCD2, 250–261; Int-HMJ2, 1677–79; Int-AGJ1, 329). The teacher-participants believe that most casual adult visitors are intrinsically motivated to visit the museum, gallery, or nature centre and are already in a “fit state to learn.” Thus the teacher-participants do not attend as closely to the supporting acts of teaching with adults as they would do with students on school tours. Instead, with adults
they move to focus on the intellectual acts that help the visitor to "get the point", "grasp the idea", "become aware of connections," and "see the larger view" (Komisar 1968, 79).

With other adults, the teacher-participants tend to see themselves as part of a community of learners among whom interpreters, docents, and gallery educators are essentially on call to teach as needed.

These discussions highlight the interconnectedness of the knowledge bases of museum teaching. Yet they also make clear that from each of the knowledge bases may emerge different and competing reasons, evidence, justification, and conclusions. How then do teacher-participants choose from amongst these in order to teach? I will address this question in the next section.

**Question 3: What Reasoning Lies Behind Museum Teaching?**

According to Shulman (1987), the key to the development of pedagogical content knowledge lies in the transformation of the content into active teaching. Pedagogical content knowledge is "the capacity of the teacher to transform the content knowledge he or she possesses into forms that are pedagogically powerful and yet adaptive to the variations in ability and background presented by the students" (Shulman 1987, 15). Shulman's model of pedagogical reasoning and action demonstrates how teachers might move from comprehension and transformation of the subject matter through to instruction, evaluation, and reflection, and ultimately, to achieve new comprehensions (p. 15).

To complete an act of teaching in the setting of the museum, gallery, or nature centre, the teacher-participants choose from amongst interconnected knowledge bases having to do with the site, learners and learning, and teachers and teaching. Their thinking is framed not only by their own biographies and experience but also by other institutionally based frames for teaching. Significant choices as to what, to whom, when, and in some cases, where material will be taught may have already been made for them by the education coordinator who develops the tours or programs. Furthermore, responses to these
tours/programs are heavily influenced by both informal and formal groups of interpreters and docents within the institutions. That the teacher-participants in the present study feel marginalized by the broader museum community both within and beyond their sites heightens the influence of these smaller groups.

Taken together, these frames organize not only their knowledge but also their teaching behaviour. The teacher-participants have several frames from which to choose, which incorporate different perspectives on several knowledge bases. They reflect critically upon the principles underlying their work, thus enabling them to switch from one interpretive frame to another in making decisions about teaching. However, the ability to view a problem through several frames presents the potential for conflicts amongst different values. Uncertainty, uniqueness, and value conflict is central to the professional practice of the teacher-participants. For teacher-participants this conflict is frequently represented by vacillation between the museum as a “climate that welcomes exploration and risk-taking and cultivates the disposition to play” and the form and rules of the tour or program (Eisner 1994, 62). In order to perform, the teacher must reconcile, integrate, or choose amongst these frames. The artistry of practice lies in the ability to do this.

This tension between structure and chaos is evident to different degrees in the teacher thinking represented on all eight tours and programs presented in chapters Five, Six, and Seven. However, during the course of the present study, the frames on three tours in particular offered special insights into the qualities of the museum to which teacher-participants attend: “owntime” at the Community History Museum, performance and ritual at the Country Art Gallery, and passion and pedagogical tact at the Nature Centre.
Overall, the teacher-participants at the Community History Museum consider their tours to be school tours. As noted in Chapter Four, these teacher-participants conduct few tours for museum visitors other than school groups. As a result, all three interpreters tend to frame their tours as extensions of the classroom curriculum. They concern themselves with how what they have to offer will be of use to the schoolteacher and whether or not it will be valued by the schools. So it was particularly interesting when the concept of what Spock (2000a) refers to as “owntime” emerged on Jennifer’s Tour. Jennifer describes her tour at the Community History Museum in terms of time “with me” and time “on their own” (Chapter Five).

I made the decision that with these kids being high-school students that they, after listening already, after being in the Interactive [Gallery], that it would be better for them to go off on their own to work on their worksheet and have that little bit of freedom. . . . I had made that decision that they had already had that formal “with me” period, so they need just to have a little bit of [time on their own]. (Int-HMJ2, 1464-88)

Her time “with me” is an exchange of information, whereas “owntime” is space for solitary looking. Even such a simple concept demonstrates how a framework helps to resolve for this teacher-participant the dilemma of meeting the demand for an educational product while at the same time contributing to the process of lifelong learning in the museum. For Jennifer, owntime serves to bridge the gap between the formal qualities of the school tour and the informal qualities of the self-directed museum visit. Through owntime students may be enabled to develop and practise the skill of using the site on their own. This may seem insignificant, but it demonstrates how teacher-participants like Jennifer reason their way through competing demands of teaching as enterprise, of getting things done, with the process of developing museum literacy.
Performance and Ritual

The second frame that came forth is that of performance and ritual. Many of the key images identified by the study’s teacher-participants at the Country Art Gallery have to do with performance. This is a more comprehensive frame than that of own time and reflects in teacher-participant thinking a critical question in the museum of education versus entertainment.

Goffman (1974) describes performance as taking place within what he terms a "theatrical frame" (p. 124–5). This theatrical frame emerges most clearly on Bern’s tour in Chapter Six. It lends itself to entertainment and enjoyment and is expressed on this tour, in part, through the minimal participation of the audience and their applause at the conclusion of the tour. But Bern’s goal on this “performance” tour is not simply for the audience to have a good time but rather to encourage learners to desire and seek knowledge independently (Schwab 1978, 109). Teacher-participants recognize that the “face-to-face relation between teacher and student” (p. 110) is an important first step toward this end. As Schwab notes, teaching is a complex interrelationship of appetite, emotion, and reason (p. 109). This fits with the common assertion among many of the teacher-participants in the present study that people skills are the most important attribute of all for museum teachers. This “liking” aspect is particularly important on an ad hoc tour, where the learners are free to leave at any time.

In some ways, the teacher-participants at the Country Art Gallery are also enacting a kind of ritual. Ritual is defined loosely as a “formalized symbolic performance” (Quartz 1999, 495). Like entertainment, ritual appeals primarily to the appetites and emotions. In addition, as noted in Chapter Nine, rituals associated with teaching serve to mark the teacher’s authority, provide a link with the past, and show certain values. The docent tour is itself part of the ritual of museum-going, affording the docent certain privileges of authority simply from being a docent but also tying him or her to certain expectations of performance.
Passion and Pedagogical Tact

The final conceptual framework that emerges from the present study is that of passion and pedagogical tact, which is most evident at the Nature Centre. Nature interpreters in the present study are passionate in their quest to bring together learners with the natural environment. As Alice says,

Today I was talking about some trees and a toad came by. Well, of course, I'm not going to say, "Oh, leave the toad for now and let's talk about trees!"

(Int-NCA3, 440–93)

This frame has a great deal to do with what is commonly known as the "teachable moment" or what Van Manen (1991a) terms the "pedagogical moment." The "pedagogical moment is embedded in the situation where something pedagogical is expected of us and in which we subsequently are oriented to do that which is good for the child" (p. 508).

Pedagogical tact is outer-directed and improvisational (Van Manen 1991b, 129–147) but it relies for its development on the understanding that the teacher knows how and what to do, and does it (p. 146). As is true for the teacher-participants at the Nature Centre, teaching must be an "authentic" (p. 225) representation of what the teacher knows.

The foregoing three vignettes suggest that teacher-participants in the present study do attend to the qualities of the setting in different and unique ways in order to better achieve what they perceive to be the goal of their teaching. As demonstrated further in chapters Five, Six, and Seven, utilizing both artistic sensitivity and practical argument, the teacher-participants work their way through acts of teaching in the museum, gallery and nature centre in a very complex manner. In the next section I will present how the teacher-participants feel they learn to teach.
Question 4: How Do Teacher-Participants Believe They Learn to Teach in Museums?

Unlike the lengthy and intensive instance of docent training cited in Chapter Two, teacher-participants in this study describe introductory training, the assessment of readiness for practice, induction into practice, and learning during practice as a more organic than linear process. When asked how they learned to teach, the teacher-participants noted three methods: acquisition of information on the subject; observation, or shadowing of fellow interpreters or docents; and the experience of teaching itself. As with their conceptions of teaching, learning how to teach is substantially affected by their own conceptions of learning and learners and by the conceptions held by those responsible for training and professional development at the respective sites. For example, those with an objectivist orientation tend to see the absorption of knowledge as the intent of training and professional development. This tends to limit the success of endeavours like observation and a community of practice, which depend for their success upon a more constructivist understanding of the nature of learning.

The teacher-participants recall their orientations to museum teaching as introductions to the content of the site’s subject matter. Training for teaching at the Community History Museum, for example, was described as “binders and binders and binders of all sorts of information” (Int-HMJ2, 55; Int-HMH1, 751–64) that involved “a LOT of reading” (Int-HMJ1, 342). For those who come to the museum, gallery, or nature centre with no previous training in the subject matter, information remains just information and does not reveal to them the substantive or syntactic structures of the discipline(s) associated with the institution.

However, observation of veteran interpreters, docents, and educators, or what some teacher-participants call “shadowing” (Int-HMG2, 456; Int-HMJ2, 500; Int-HMH2, 300), features prominently in their accounts of learning to teach. Yet learning by observation is often restricted by the inability of the observer to see what’s happening “in
the wings” (Lortie 1975, 62). Simply watching another person tour is not enough. Observation is felt to be successful only when it is accompanied by focused discussion amongst the teachers involved. Without this reasoned approach, it is tempting for many to simply duplicate the style of the practitioner with whom they first work.

Some of the teacher-participants found assistance in their development as museum teachers by becoming part of a larger community of practice. This is in keeping with research on professional development in school teaching, which suggests that “relationships that teachers form with colleagues in their departments or in subject-matter organizations matter most in terms of professional development; teachers need colleagues to provide a professional community in which to learn and develop” (Grossman and Stodolsky 1994, 182). Such communities of practice help teacher-participants frame their experiences by providing models of teaching. However, in the present study the success of these communities of practice is influenced by the hierarchical, professional, and membership controls and marginalization discussed above that is encountered by teacher-participants.

Each of the teacher-participants in this study recounts that experience in teaching was a major factor in learning how to teach in the museum, gallery, or park. Some draw upon experience in school teaching, others compile experience from their work in one institution, and still others have accumulated teaching experiences in a variety of settings. In keeping with objectivist or constructivist approaches to learning, experience is sometimes depicted as something captured in the past and applied to situations in the present, a kind of “mechanical application of pedagogical algorithms” (Kilbourn 1998, 55). At other times, experience is imagined as something ongoing, growing, and expanding, something that demands continuity and interaction with past, present, and future situations.

The teacher-participants frequently refer to what they believe to be instinctive or automatic about their teaching. For those moves to succeed, however, they seem to require other, more thoughtful, acts that integrate them into a well-rounded whole, as Kilbourn
suggests (1998, 54). Otherwise, what teacher-participants see as experience results in a narrowing of the choice of experiences on which they are able to draw in the future. It is a kind of groove or rut. Teacher-participants feel that the nature of museum teaching tends to frustrate efforts to get out of this rut. Not only are they on site infrequently, irregularly, and with different colleagues, but tours are short and conducted with changing groups of learners. This tends to support Williams (1984b) contention that time spent on on-site teaching is critical for the development of a museum teacher.

Teacher-participants with extensive experience in teaching, for example, the retired schoolteachers in the study, feel they bring a repertoire of teaching behaviours with them from which they “cue back up” those that suit the group and the situation (Int-AGW2B, 872–91; Int-AGB2, 545–67). But these experiences can be limiting if they are not reflected upon and adapted to the unique situation of the museum, gallery, or nature centre, as opposed to that of the classroom. Furthermore, this extensive repertoire of teaching behaviours seems to be available to those who come directly to museum teaching only when they are assigned a significant number of tours or programs on which they are then able to reflect.

Taken together, these findings present—from the perspective of docents, interpreters, and a gallery educator—a portrait of teaching in museums, galleries, and nature centres that is both highly complex and challenging.

REFLECTIONS ON METHOD

The conditional nature of educational life, its high degree of context specificity, is formidable. What this means for practice and for the uses of research is that in most settings generalizations derived from research are not likely to be taken as gospel. Researchers are not the ones to provide rules of procedure to practitioners; there are no seven sacred steps to effective teaching. We offer considerations to be shared and discussed, reflected upon, and debated. . . . the relationship between researcher and teacher, between the products of research and their use in the schools, is one of mutual inquiry and negotiation. Their generalizing qualities are not so much located in Truth as in their ability to refine perception and deepen conversation. (Eisner 1991, 204–5)
In the present study I have developed pictures of eight unique museum teachers and their conceptions of the nature of teaching in the museum, gallery, and nature centre. Links have been made between what these teachers know and how they reason their way through and complete an act of pedagogy. The use of a case-study approach permitted the "intensive, holistic description and analysis of a bounded phenomenon" (Merriam 1998, xiii) that is strengthened by the exploration of three cases: the Community History Museum, the Country Art Gallery, and the Nature Centre. The relationship that developed through the medium of the case studies between individual teacher-participants and myself as researcher frequently took the form of what Eisner (1991) terms "mutual inquiry and negotiation" (p. 204-5). More such collaborative work with teacher-participants, both individually as well as in a group, would have been helpful. Working more closely with teacher-participants as a group to plan and monitor the overall course of the study might have resulted in a smoother entry for me into the field and a quicker response time in terms of the transcription and review of data. The opportunity for teacher-participants as a group to engage in face-to-face discussions of their principles and practice would also have enriched the data and been more profitable to them as practitioners.

Secondly, this is a relatively small study and consequently my findings are limited by the type and number of sites investigated as well as by the number and types of teacher-participants. No attempt was made in the study to construct a representative sample of museum teachers. The teacher-participants tended to be people who were comfortable with being observed and with reflecting upon their practice and who felt they had something to say about teaching in the museum, gallery, or nature centre. My personal experience as a museum educator of long-standing, coupled with extensive reading of the museum literature, allows a degree of generalizability but clearly my findings need to be investigated further in other settings, with other museum teachers. If it transpired that future studies corroborated what I have found at the Country Art Gallery, the Community History Museum, and the Nature Centre then the following considerations would be pertinent.
CONSIDERATIONS FOR PRACTICE

As is apparent in the foregoing presentation of findings, this is a descriptive study and, as such, there are no direct implications. However, in the spirit of Eisner (1991, 204–5) I wish to offer some considerations for practice “to be shared and discussed, reflected upon, and debated.”

In Chapter One I described my personal orientation to the study as one responsible for the development and implementation of a curriculum that identified and refined generic skills applicable to touring in museums, galleries, and parks. I assumed that, while the content of the tours would differ, the method and skills required to conduct the tours and programs would be the same. In this section I want to revisit those assumptions and to reflect upon them in relation to the findings of the study. I also want to discuss general considerations for the field of museum education in terms of learning and teaching in the museum, the orientation and continuing development of museum teachers, and finally, the conception of teaching beyond the museum, gallery, and nature centre. In conclusion, I will pose questions for future study.

The Complexity of Teaching in Museums, Galleries and Nature Centres

Revisiting the learning outcomes of my course “Guiding Tours in Our Galleries, Museums and Parks,” as outlined in Chapter One, what is revealed in retrospect is my own failure at the time to comprehend the full complexity of museum teaching. The foregoing discussion has helped to focus on what is unique and complex about museum teaching as it has emerged from this study. In particular, I believe it has drawn attention to the importance of both prior and situated knowledge in the development of museum teachers.

The teacher-participants bring with them prior knowledge that includes, among other things, discipline-based understandings, other museum and teaching experiences, and practical, often tacit, theories of teaching and learning. Constructivist theory, as interpreted
by Jeffery (2000) and presented in Chapter One, holds that prior knowledge is of primary importance because it is upon this knowledge structure that learners hang new information. “To learn meaningfully,” Jeffery argues, “a person must choose to integrate new knowledge into his or her conceptual structure, relating the new knowledge to pre-existing knowledge and experiences.” (p. 213). From the perspective of the teacher-participants in this study, training and development by the site provide information on subject matter and the site but rarely offer a way to question this new learning or to link it to knowledge already in place. In the absence of reflection on prior knowledge and modification of it in accordance with new information provided by the site, the teacher-participants tend to develop an implicit and intuitive “situated” knowledge arising from their teaching practice in the particular museum, gallery, or nature centre, which is unrelated to disciplinary-based ways of knowing, formal theories of education, and broader practice in the field of museum education.

Yellis (1984) argues that museum teachers must know how they teach, what choices they make and what alternative constructs are available in order to provide the intellectual tools and raw materials for visitors to provide their own constructs (p. 22). It is only reasonable to assume the same must be expected for those who teach the teachers. By choosing not to make evident the reasons, evidence, justification, and conclusion that underlie the training and professional development of museum teachers, or perhaps being unable to do it, education coordinators (and others responsible for training), Storr (1994) contends, stymie the development of museum teachers at a “relatively simplistic level.”

**Training and Continuing Professional Education of Museum Teachers**

If we agree with Storr and Yellis, then museum teachers would benefit by a more concerted and thoughtful approach to their training and continuing professional education. This curriculum could strive to bridge the gap between formal theories of the disciplines,
museology, education, and what Schöln (1987) calls the “phenomenology of practice” (p. 322) through reflection upon and analysis of museum teaching. At the same time, however, training and professional development must respect the current constraints facing museums, galleries, and nature centres in Ontario. In particular, these constraints have resulted in reduced funding and staff reductions that leave fewer experienced and knowledgeable full-time staff in the area of museum education and interpretation. Along with the decline in full-time staff has come a growing dependency on volunteers and contract workers. Education coordinators who are responsible for training and continuing professional education on a site-specific basis are pressed to provide additional time, energy, or money for the development of museum teachers. At the same time, museum teachers themselves are more often part-time volunteer or contract workers with little incentive to pursue and time or energy to devote to additional training and continuing development of their teaching practice.

Nevertheless, the findings of the present study suggest that all aspects of teacher knowledge (scholarship in content disciplines, educational materials and settings, formal educational scholarship, and wisdom of practice), together with pedagogical reasoning (Shulman 1987), are important for museum teacher development. Museum teachers need to learn more beyond the content information that is currently supplied to them in great quantities. Both the traditional discipline(s) associated with the site and museology itself need to be taught in a way that makes visible the methods of inquiry. Museum teachers need to know how research is undertaken, how it is reflected upon, and the forms of inquiry available in the discipline. Moreover, the present study suggests that museum teachers bring with them a considerable amount of prior knowledge, in terms of their own discipline-based ways of knowing as well as personal experiences of museum-going, that should be made explicit and reflected upon, as Schöln (1987, 322) suggests, in the presence of representatives of the disciplines such as traditional museum curators or other subject area specialists.
The milieu in which training and continuing professional education takes place is also significant. The "authenticity" of museum teaching seems to require that it be grounded in the setting and that prior knowledge of museums be reflected upon and discussed in terms of the present teaching situation. This need not preclude the offering of training and development off-site, if done in thoughtful collaboration with associations of museum workers, regional consortia of museums, galleries, and parks, or universities and community colleges. Resources like Spock's (2000b) videotape and study guide documenting the "pivotal museum memories" of selected museum workers are helpful in representing the broader picture. However, as noted above, it is critical that such new learning be deliberately reflected upon and linked to on-site teaching practice. If this is not undertaken the new knowledge is likely to be jettisoned in favour of a return to the tried and true whenever dissonance is encountered.

The organizational climate of the setting should also be addressed in training and development. Discussions with the teacher-participants in this study have identified how they integrate new knowledge into existing conceptual structures through reflective practice both alone and in groups. Observations of and interactions with fellow museum teachers that encourage reflection and new comprehensions appear to be productive overall but may be detrimental when the structure provided for reflection is inadequate. There is a need for deliberate thought to be given to assisting both personal reflective practice and the operations of the communities of practice within the sites. Framing shadowing activities and the development of teaching experience within the approach of a more formal practicum, in which assistance in reflective practice is provided for both the veteran museum teacher and the novice, may be useful.

At the same time, there is a concomitant need for training and ongoing professional education within the broader community of practice comprised of museum teachers across institutions. The findings of this study indicate that museum teachers are "trapped in a solipsistic universe in which only their own experiences [are] potentially educative"
(Shulman 1998, 521). Some training and development of museum teachers could be coordinated so as to take place under the auspices of regional consortia of museums, galleries, or nature centres or through associations of museum workers. This focus on the commonalities amongst them could be followed by on-site training and coaching to better develop site-specific and discipline-based teacher thinking. The community of practice could be broadened through the dissemination of case studies of practice such as those depicted in the present study.

Conceptions of learners and their capacity to learn play a critical role in the development of pedagogical reasoning and judgement, if this study is any indication. Yet the teacher-participants suggested that on the whole they, as learners themselves, felt marginalized by their institutions and did not participate in the life of the museum or gallery. With the exception of the Nature Centre, sites were not seen to develop a rich and rewarding learning environment for their own museum teachers, who were, nevertheless, expected to foster such an environment for the museum’s visitors. Conceptions of learning and learners could be addressed by the adoption of a more constructivist approach to training and development that encourages museum teachers to first reflect upon their own processes of inquiry in the museum and then to compare and contrast these not only with their peers but also with formal theories of educational scholarship. Coupled with interactions with museum learners and ensuing reflection with peers and colleagues, such an approach could encourage a better sense of the constructivist dynamic of teaching than does the present more objectivist approach to museum training, which emphasizes the acquisition of information and the shadowing of peers without thoughtful reflection.

In terms of ongoing professional development, teacher-participants noted the added dimension that genuine involvement in exhibit and program development contributed to their teaching. While it must be recognized that time and energy are limitations for many contract and volunteer museum teachers, participation in these processes could be offered as professional development not only for museum teachers but also for other education
staff members. Genuine participation by museum teachers in the development of tours and programs could assist their own professional development not only by illuminating the reasons and warrants behind the tour or program, but also by helping to better ground the philosophical framework of museum education within the institution as a whole. This might also contribute to the exploration by museums, galleries, and natural settings of not only what is unique about them as learning resources in the Learning Domain (Thomas 1991) but also of how this can best be presented to the general public. This study highlights the ongoing struggle, “the endless dialogue, and sometimes conflict, between Learning and Education” (Thomas 2000). Clarification of the organizing principles of museum teaching benefits museum teachers and visitors alike.

Finally, this new curriculum for training and continuing professional education requires museums, galleries, and nature centres to take more seriously their role as teachers in the development of interpreters, docents, and gallery educators. This involves a radical shift in perspective: from one of how museum teachers may be used to fulfil the institutional mission, to one of how museum teachers may be enabled to learn and improve their practice. This thinking would need to extend to education coordinators, who are expected to train and develop museum teachers but often are not given the time or knowledge to do so. It might also mean a new approach to museum teaching in Ontario that looks to the development of a few, full-time museum teachers rather than many part-time, contract workers. These approaches do not necessarily require more time or money for training and professional development, but rather a more thoughtful and reasoned approach and commitment to the definition and creation of teacher in the museum setting.

**Teaching Beyond Schooling**

Clarification of the organizing principles of museum teaching also serves to identify the ways in which museum teaching both differs from and resembles the teaching that takes place in the schools. Obviously this study has focused on teaching in non-school settings,
but, given my experience as a museum educator together with the findings of this study, I
would like to make a point of observation to do with schoolteachers. It could be beneficial
to both if the museum teaching practice of schoolteachers with whom museum teachers are
so frequently partnered on tours and programs were similarly enabled through pre-service
and ongoing professional development.

Accounts of teaching in the museum as cited in Chapters One and Two tend to
distinguish the type of teaching directed at school groups from that which is directed
toward groups of casual visitors (Grandmont 1995,327–8). Likewise, the CMA’s
competencies differentiate amongst what is required for museum education, public
programming and interpretation (1999). With regard to school teaching or museum
Teaching for school groups, teacher-participants in the present study tended to focus on
structure and accountability. Schoolteachers observed while accompanying their classes to
the museum were inclined to emphasize working over playing in the museum setting. As
Gilman (1984) asserted, school teaching is seen to be “constrained by collective
instruction” and “compelled to aim at examination”. This is what Komisar (1968) termed
teaching as enterprise and it seems to have little to do with what the museum, gallery, or
nature centre is truly about.

At the same time, however, teacher-participants in the present study who had
teaching experience in both settings identified the commonality that existed between
teaching in or for schools and teaching for casual visitors. Teaching is teaching, they said.
For these museum teachers it does not matter whether the learner has come with a school
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teaching in or for schools and teaching for casual visitors. Teaching is teaching, they said.
For these museum teachers it does not matter whether the learner has come with a school
group, a family, or on their own. I think this is best understood through Komisar’s concept
of teaching as an intellectual act. Teachers exist in both the museum and the school, and in
other settings as well, whose aim is to produce awareness of some point by divulging to
the learner not only the intent of the lesson but also the reasons behind it (Komisar 1968,
68). Museums, galleries, and nature centres may be recreational, leisure-time, and social
environments, but as long as people also come with the aim of learning or the potential to
become learners, then teachers in these different settings have much to learn from and teach one another.

QUESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The intent of this study was to explore and develop a tentative understanding of the museum and of the broader social context within which teaching occurs, from the meaning-perspective of the teachers themselves. I sought a better understanding of their lived experiences by capturing the core of these meanings and contradictions in three sets of circumstances. Given that education and interpretation is a relatively under-researched area in the field of museum studies, there are a number of directions future research could take. This study has supported Soren’s (1990) findings that an approach using the ‘commonplaces’ of curriculum (subject matter, milieu, learners and learning, and teachers and teaching) to study these informal settings is a useful one. Further research on teachers and teaching could explore any one of these commonplaces in more detail.

Subject matter and the importance of discipline-based meaning for teaching in museums, galleries, and parks is certainly worthy of further exploration, as would be the professional context for museum teachers. A study of the teaching and learning relationships within and surrounding a group of museum teachers within one gallery, history museum, or nature centre would add to understandings of the social and personal contexts of museum use. Another study could pursue the question of the effect of gender on museum teaching practice that was raised in the course of this study.

This study took as its concentration face-to-face teaching in the museum, gallery and nature centre, but museum teaching as it takes place through the different media of exhibits, “publications, seminars, debates, symposia, theatrical productions, music, educational workshops, and “discovery spaces” (Grandmont 1995,327–8) and, of course, through the increasingly popular “virtual museums” of the World Wide Web, could be the subject of productive study and comparison.
Furthermore, any study of the museum environment would not be complete without a call for more research on museum learners. This study has emphasized from the perspective of the museum teacher how much of museum teaching is about responding to learners and their learning needs. Museum teaching is about being on call to teach in conditions of limited time and interaction. Teachers need to know how their tour or program may have contributed to what the learner knows, feels, or is capable of doing. Such research would allow for an expansion of the considerable knowledge museum teachers have in this area. It would also better allow them to compare and contrast experiences, analyze, and reframe the precepts of their teaching.

Finally, I would like to comment upon possibilities for future work that are more directly related to the present study. I believe that this study confirms that research on teacher thinking must involve observations of what museums teachers do "on the floor" or "in the forest." The use of transcriptions of tours/programs to focus discussion of teacher thinking proved particularly fruitful and has the potential to be the beginning of a larger effort to collect, collate, and interpret the practical knowledge of museum teachers. The videotaping of such tours and programs would enhance this collection, as long as the privacy concerns of audience members could be adequately addressed. A longer-term study with more teacher-participants would serve to further "refine perception and deepen conversation" (Eisner 1991, 204–5). Because experience has proven to be such a factor in this study, another study could explore further the differences between beginning and veteran museum teachers or between those with and without school teaching experience.

There is also great potential for "action research" conducted by museum teachers themselves. Action research is seen as more practical, directed at the concerns of the practitioners themselves, and, for those who wish it, a tool for social change (Bogdan and Biklen 1998, 224). This approach would be useful for the contribution it could make not only to a case literature but also to the training and continuing education of museum teachers. Lemelin (2001) has embarked on such a study at the Ontario Institute for Studies
in Education of the University of Toronto. Action research projects like hers encourage exploration of the complex environment of the museum, gallery, and nature centre suggested by this study while at the same time, they make museum teachers more aware of their own values and meaning-making and how those values affect their attitudes toward the other commonplaces of the museum curriculum.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

Since I began this dissertation with a personal orientation, it now seems appropriate to end with a note of personal reflection. The University of Toronto no longer offers the course “Guiding Tours in Our Galleries, Museums, and Parks,” but I continue to provide orientation and continuing professional education for museum teachers. In light of the present study, I cringe a little when reviewing my course outline as presented in Chapter One. There was so much about the art and craft of teaching that I did not know, that I do not know now and still cannot adequately represent. However, one understanding did emerge again and again from my reading of the literature, from my work with the teacher-participants and other museum colleagues, and from my own reflective practice: the necessity for profound respect for and dialogue amongst those involved in museum teaching, whether they are cast as learners or teachers. Buber’s (1958, 11) I-Thou relationship captures the essence of this concept. I close my dissertation with this quotation from his work:
THE THOU MEETS ME THROUGH GRACE—it is not found by seeking. But my speaking of the primary act of my being, is indeed the act of my being.

The Thou meets me. But I step into direct relationship with it. Hence the relation means being chosen and choosing, suffering and action in one; just as any action of the whole being, which means the suspension of all partial actions and consequently of all sensations of actions grounded only in their particular limitation is bound to resemble suffering.

The primary word I-Thou can be spoken only with the whole being. Concentration and fusion into the whole being can never take place through my agency, nor can it ever take place without me. I become through my relation to the Thou; as I become I, I say Thou.

All real living is meeting.
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APPENDIX 1

ADMINISTRATIVE CONSENT FORM

ADMINISTRATIVE CONSENT FORM

RESEARCH PROPOSAL

Title of proposed research project:
The Professional Knowledge of Museum Teachers

Principal Investigator:
M. Christine Castle, Ph.D. Candidate
Department of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning
The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the
University of Toronto

1 Purpose

The broad purpose of the study is to document and analyze the nature and experience of teaching within the museum setting from the perspective of the teacher.

2 Problem statement

The area of interest for this study is museum teachers and the development of their professional knowledge. It will be an interpretive inquiry which seeks to document and analyze the nature and experience of teaching within the museum setting from the perspective of the teacher. The role and function of the museum in society has continually changed and evolved since its inception in the 18th century. But never has this been more apparent than in the last quarter of the 20th century when the museum has emerged as an institution fraught with controversy and struggling to define itself.

As those who work in museums grapple with issues of money, power and control, they have increasingly recognized the need to encourage museum visitors to make their own decisions, to become their own interpreters of what the institution has to offer. Many contend that one aim of museum education is to enable museum visitors to teach - both themselves and others. Yet little is known about museum teaching as it is currently practised. Few have considered what it means to teach in the museum or the significance which teaching has for teachers themselves. The inquiry will be an attempt to go beyond the identification of competencies in order to address the complexity of teaching within the museum setting.

Therefore, I have identified three issues for research:

1. How does the interaction between museum teachers, their experience and the context in which they practice give rise to their knowing how to teach?
2. How do teachers use their understandings to reason their way through and complete an act of pedagogy in the museum setting?
3. How may museum teaching be conceptualized?

While I acknowledge that many types of teachers and many forms of teaching occur within the museum setting, the teachers with whom I plan to work are experienced educators engaged on a regular basis in face-to-face teaching. The job titles by which these educators are known include museum teacher, guide, docent, host and natural or cultural interpreter. The framework for their work is the guided tour - a structured or semi-structured activity with an educational intent designed by the teacher for the museum visitor(s) and which focuses upon the museum’s collection.

3 Why this setting?

The [name of museum] supports an active and well-respected teaching program in the field. There is evidence of an experienced and thoughtful staff of museum teachers who provide tours on a regular basis. Initial inquiries have suggested to me that the institution and at least two of the teaching staff would be interested in and willing to participate.

Furthermore, The [name of museum] will provide the study with a perspective on museum teaching as provided by teachers working within an institution with a discipline-base in history. This will complement and inform research undertaken in the two other participating institutions which will have as their respective discipline bases art and history.

4 Value of the project to [name of museum]

4.1 Significance

The significance of this study lies, first, in its acknowledgement of the role of teaching in the museum. An appreciation of the complex professional knowledge formed by the teacher in the undertaking of his or her work within the museum will contribute to the overall study of learning in the museum. By studying the understandings and skills of museum teachers I hope to identify the importance of their teaching practice to the achievement of their own learning goals not only as teachers but also as museum learners. Ultimately, a firmer grasp on what it means to teach in the museum will enable educators to better share with museum visitors how to use the museum and its contents in order to achieve the personal learning goals of the visitor.

Secondly, my analysis of museum teaching will advance the development of training and professional development for museum educators. While a growing literature exists of prescriptive methods regarding the training of both paid and unpaid museum educators there has been little published on the more elusive ‘artistry’ of live teaching. There is a pressing need to recognize the complexity of the tasks involved in teaching and the consequent implications such recognition has for training. This research will also contribute to the general understanding of new models of professional education in the reflective practice mode which will be relevant to other jobs and functions in the museum.

4.2 Professional perspective of the researcher

- initial training and teaching experience as a museum educator
- ten years of museum management experience as the Curator of, first, the Oakville Museums and, then, The Gibson House Museum
ten year consulting practice in museum education and interpretation with a specialization in training and professional development

5 Methodology

The proposed inquiry will be a participant observation study of the work of two museum teachers at your site. I propose to take part in from five to ten guided tours with each of the two teacher-participants over a three month period from February to April 1998. This participant observation will be supplemented by several unstructured interviews concerning the teachers’ experience and beliefs and exploring particular incidents observed during the tours.

At the end of each tour, I will prepare detailed written field notes. The interviews will be taped and transcribed. Complete copies of these notes and transcripts will be available to the participant as they are produced. Teacher-participants will also be asked to keep an ongoing journal account of their teaching, and their thoughts about their teaching.

The research project will be limited to the work of the two participating teachers. Neither museum visitors nor other teachers will be asked to participate in the research. Nor will the field work involve any interruption to the museum’s programs. However, some associated demands will be made on the time of the teacher-participants, particularly related to the interviews.

6 Selection of study participants

At this site, I hope to work with two self-selected teacher-participants who view themselves as accomplished museum teachers, willing and able to reflect upon their teaching experiences at [name of museum]; who conduct tours on a regular basis; and, who are willing to commit a significant amount of time and energy to this project.

I have discussed this project with the senior staff person responsible for museum programs, [Education Coordinator]. [Education Coordinator] has indicated her willingness to support this research.

As well, an Ethical Review is now being completed through OISE/UT to ensure the study meets the acceptable professional standards for the conduct of educational research.

7 Analysis of data

Analysis of data will take place both on an on-going basis as well as at the completion of data collection for all the sites. Complete copies of participant observation notes and interview transcripts will be available to the teacher-participants as they are produced. On the basis of these records, I will prepare a series of interpretive accounts. Teacher-participants read and respond to each account, suggesting corrections or deletions, and noting differences of opinion. These responses, and discussions of the response, will inform further drafts of the interpretation to be included in thesis.

The goal of discussing the text is to present a plausible and persuasive account of the events, not to judge or evaluate the museum teacher or his/her teaching practice against
some external standard. Should any substantial differences of interpretation remain after a period of discussion, the portrayal will note these differences of opinion.

8 Ethical issues

The following steps will be taken in an attempt to ensure the anonymity and confidentiality of the research, and to attempt to protect teacher-participants from the possibility of evaluation on the basis of the written report.

8.1 Anonymity

All proper names and identifying details relating to the site, the museum teachers and to the visitors will be altered in the field notes, journal copies, interview transcripts and interpretive accounts.

As the focus of the study is on the perspective of the two teacher-participants on the nature and experience of museum teaching, accounts of the actions of other teachers and of visitors will appear only as background to teacher-participant portrayals of their work. Should any substantial commentary about the actions of other teachers or visitors be required in order to elaborate on some aspect of teaching, then the use of such details will be negotiated on a case by case basis with the teachers or visitors concerned.

8.2 Confidentiality

Field notes, journal copies and transcripts prepared during the research process will remain confidential. With the exception of members of my thesis committee and a colleague acting as a research auditor, this data will not be shared with any other third parties without the explicit permission of the teacher-participants.

8.3 Protection against the possibility of evaluation

The [name of museum] will not have access to field notes, journal copies, interview transcripts or working papers. The [name of museum] will receive a copy of the completed thesis.

8.4 Right to withdraw

I acknowledge that the teacher-participants have the right to withdraw from the study at any time.

6 Written Consent

If you are willing to support this research project, please complete the following declaration.

On behalf of this institution, I am willing to support the research project “The Professional Knowledge of Museum Teachers”

Signed __________________________ Position __________________________ On behalf of [name of museum]

Date __________________________
APPENDIX 2

STAFF INTRODUCTION LETTER

Research Project—“The Professional Knowledge of the Museum Teacher”

M. Christine Castle

My name is Christine Castle. At present, I am a Ph.D. candidate at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto. I am just beginning work on my thesis, the subject of which is “The Professional Knowledge of the Museum Teacher”.

The aim of my research is to document and analyze the nature and experience of teaching within museum settings from the perspective of the teacher, or the docent, guide, interpreter, host, etc. as teachers are called within non-school settings. Through this I hope to better understand how educators learn and teach in the museums, galleries and parks in which they work. My research will contribute to an acknowledgement of the value of face to face museum teaching and to the development of future professional development programs. It will also, I hope, enable future educators to share with museum visitors how to use the museum and its contents in order to help visitors better achieve their personal learning goals.

In order to do this, I plan to work with two museum teachers at each of three sites for a period of several months at each site. Because of the excellent reputation of its staff in the area of museum interpretation, the willingness of senior staff to be involved, and its proximity to [name of city], [name of museum] may be one of these sites. However, my research will depend on the participation of two guides or docents over a period of approximately three months.

My interest lies in the lived experience of teaching as seen through the eyes of the teachers themselves. In no way will it constitute a judgement or evaluation of teaching practice. I wish to gather information in three ways:

• observing 4 - 6 guided tours;
• talking with each teacher-participant about your teaching, your background, and why you do what you do in two or three conversational interviews; and,
• reading ‘teaching journals’ - any notes, comments, analysis which teacher-participants choose to jot down and share with me about your teaching over the 2 - 3 months we will be working together.

Copies of all field notes, interview transcripts, and interpretive materials will be made available to the respective teacher-participant for corrections, deletions, or noting differences of opinion. For purposes of anonymity and confidentiality, all proper names and identifying details will be altered in field notes, transcripts, and in the thesis. [Name of museum] will not have access to this data, but will receive a copy of the completed thesis as will each teacher-participant.

Each teacher-participant has the right to withdraw at any point in the process.

I am looking for teacher-participants who are accomplished museum “teachers”, willing and able to reflect upon their teaching experiences at [name of museum]; who conduct tours on a regular basis; and, who are willing to voluntarily commit a significant amount of time and energy to this project.
INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH PROJECT

The purpose of this letter is to formally invite you to participate with me in a research project which will be submitted as partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the University of Toronto. The project will be conducted within the Department of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto. It will be supervised by Dr. Brent Kilbourn. The working title of the project is “The Professional Knowledge of Museum Teachers”.

1 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The broad purpose of the study is to document and analyze the nature and experience of teaching within the museum setting from the perspective of the teacher.

In my thesis proposal, three issues for research have been identified:

   1. How does the interaction between museum teachers, their experience and the context in which they practice give rise to their knowing how to teach? Here, I am interested in exploring with you your personal history, your beliefs about teaching in the museum setting, and your habits of practice.

   2. How do teachers use their understandings to reason their way through and complete an act of pedagogy in the museum setting? Here, I am interested in the different kinds of knowledge which inform your teaching.
3. How may museum teaching be conceptualized? Based on the evidence collected on the first two questions, I hope to make some theoretical contributions to the way practitioners currently think and talk about the idea of museum teaching and its relationship to the broader issue of museum learning in general.

2 SELECTION OF CASE STUDY PARTICIPANTS

I have chosen to invite you to participate in this research project because you and your site meet the criteria I have set out for the selection of study participants: that is, the representation of different discipline-bases e.g. science, art, history; the existence of an active teaching program in the galleries; an experienced and thoughtful museum teacher; and the willingness of the institution and teacher to participate. You are one of six participants at three institutions.

3 METHODOLOGY

The main way in which I would like to gather the evidence for this study is by participating in and observing the tours of the six participants. I would like to be able to do so at your site for approximately three months from March to May, 1998. During this time I would like to be able to take part in four to six guided tours. In addition, I would like to be able to interview you several times during this period.

At the end of each tour, I will prepare written field notes. The interviews will be taped and transcribed. Complete copies of these notes and transcripts will be available to you as they are produced. You will also be asked to keep an ongoing journal account of your teaching, and your thoughts about your teaching, a copy of which you will make available to me. On the basis of these records, I will prepare a series of interpretive accounts. Then, I would like you to read and respond to each account, suggesting corrections or deletions, and noting differences of opinion. These responses, and discussions of the responses, will inform further drafts of the interpretation to be included in the thesis.

The goal of discussing the text of these accounts is to develop a version which we can both agree represents a fair portrayal of the events. That is, the goal is to present a plausible and persuasive account of the events, not to judge or evaluate your practice against some external standard. Should any substantial differences of interpretation remain after a period of discussion, the portrayal will note these differences of opinion.

4 ETHICAL ISSUES

The following steps will be taken to ensure the anonymity and confidentiality of the research, and to protect participants from the possibility of evaluation on the basis of the written report.

4.1 Anonymity

All proper names and identifying details relating to the site, the museum teachers and to the visitors will be altered in the field notes, journal copies, interview transcripts and interpretive accounts.

As the focus of the study is on your perspective of the nature and experience of museum teaching, accounts of the actions of other teachers and of visitors will appear only as
background to your portrayals of your work. Should any substantial commentary about the actions of other teachers or visitors be required in order to elaborate on some aspect of your teaching, then the use of such details will be negotiated on a case by case basis with the teachers or visitors concerned.

4.2 Confidentiality

Field notes, journals and transcripts prepared during the research process will remain confidential. With the exception of members of my thesis committee and a colleague acting as a research auditor, this data will not be shared with any other third parties without your explicit permission.

Interpretive accounts prepared from the data during the life of the project will be cleared with you before they are discussed with any third parties.

4.3 Protection against the possibility of evaluation

The [name of museum] will not have access to field notes, journal copies, interview transcripts or working papers. The [name of museum] will receive a copy of the completed thesis.

4.4 Right to withdraw

I acknowledge that you have the right to withdraw from the study at any time.

5 BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATION

In return for your participation, I believe that I can offer you professional assistance in at least two ways. First, I am able to act as a disinterested colleague with whom you may explore your understanding of your work as a museum teacher and of the place of teaching within the museum. Second, I will be pleased to be of assistance in any way I can during a tour program or in the gallery during the period of the research project.

6 WRITTEN CONSENT

If you are willing to participate in this research project, please complete the following declaration.

I am willing to participate in the research project "The Professional Knowledge of Museum Teachers"

Name __________________________

Signed __________________________

Date __________________________
APPENDIX 4

PROJECT LOG

PROJECT LOG CODES

FN - Field Notes; INT - Interview

AG - The Country Art Gallery; HM - The Community History Museum; NC - The Nature Centre

A - Alice; B - Bern; D - Dwight; G - Gord; H - Helen; HMJ - Jennifer or AGJ - Joan; W - Walt
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CODE</th>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>TIME</th>
<th>PLACE</th>
<th>NOTES</th>
<th>REVIEW</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FN - NCA1</td>
<td>02-10-97</td>
<td>9:30 a.m.- 1:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Nature Centre</td>
<td>Alice - Settlers' Walk</td>
<td>14-10-97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FN - NCD1</td>
<td>02-06-97</td>
<td>9:15 a.m.- 12:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Nature Centre</td>
<td>Dwight - Hurricanes</td>
<td>30-10-98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>08-10-97</td>
<td>12:45 - 4:15 p.m.</td>
<td>Nature Centre</td>
<td>Alice - observation only</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FN - NCA2</td>
<td>14-10-97</td>
<td>9:30 a.m.- 12:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Nature Centre</td>
<td>Dwight - Backpacking</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FN - NCA3</td>
<td>15-10-97</td>
<td>9:20 a.m.- 12:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Nature Centre</td>
<td>Alice - Trees</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FN - NCA4</td>
<td>23-10-97</td>
<td>9:05 a.m.- 1:15 p.m.</td>
<td>Nature Centre</td>
<td>Alice - River Systems</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FN - NCD2</td>
<td>28-10-97</td>
<td>9:15 a.m.- 12:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Nature Centre</td>
<td>Dwight - River Systems</td>
<td>30-10-98</td>
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<tr>
<td>FN - NCA5</td>
<td>09-11-97</td>
<td>1:30 p.m.- 4:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Nature Centre</td>
<td>Dwight - Preparing for Winter</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>INT - NCD1</td>
<td>11-11-97</td>
<td>10:00 - 11:30 a.m.</td>
<td>Dwight's Home</td>
<td>Dwight Interview 1</td>
<td>30-10-98</td>
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<td>13-11-97</td>
<td>10:00 - 11:30 a.m.</td>
<td>Nature Centre</td>
<td>Dwight Interview 1</td>
<td>30-10-98</td>
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<td>13-11-97</td>
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<td>Dwight Interview 2</td>
<td>30-10-98</td>
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<td>FN - NCA1</td>
<td>19-11-97</td>
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<td>30-10-98</td>
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<td>03-12-97</td>
<td>4:00 - 5:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Cafe</td>
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<td>30-10-98</td>
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<td>FN - HMG1</td>
<td>11-12-97</td>
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<td>History Museum</td>
<td>Gord - Settlers</td>
<td>30-10-98</td>
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<td>FN - HMJ1</td>
<td>16-12-97</td>
<td>9:30 a.m.- 1:30 p.m.</td>
<td>History Museum</td>
<td>Jennifer - General/Simple Machines</td>
<td>24-02-98</td>
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<tr>
<td>FN - HMJ2</td>
<td>10-02-98</td>
<td>9:30 - 11:30 a.m.</td>
<td>History Museum</td>
<td>Jennifer - Simple Machines</td>
<td>24-02-98</td>
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<tr>
<td>FN - HMJ3</td>
<td>24-02-98</td>
<td>12:00 - 2:00 p.m.</td>
<td>History Museum</td>
<td>Jennifer - First Peoples</td>
<td>05-03-98</td>
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<td>FN - HMJ4</td>
<td>25-02-98</td>
<td>9:30 - 11:30 a.m.</td>
<td>History Museum</td>
<td>Jennifer - Simple Machines</td>
<td>24-02-98</td>
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<td>FN - HMG2</td>
<td>02-03-98</td>
<td>9:30 - 11:30 a.m.</td>
<td>History Museum</td>
<td>Gord - Time Trekkers - Basis for Int-HMG2/3</td>
<td>24-02-98</td>
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<td>FN - HMH1</td>
<td>03-03-98</td>
<td>9:45 - 11:45 a.m.</td>
<td>History Museum</td>
<td>Helen - Simple Machines</td>
<td>24-04-98</td>
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<td>FN - HMH2</td>
<td>03-03-98</td>
<td>12:15 - 2:15 p.m.</td>
<td>History Museum</td>
<td>Helen - Titanic</td>
<td>24-04-98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INT - HMJ1</td>
<td>05-03-98</td>
<td>10:15 a.m.- 12 p.m.</td>
<td>Jennifer's Home</td>
<td>Jennifer Interview 1</td>
<td>15-09-98</td>
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<td>FN - HMJ5</td>
<td>10-03-98</td>
<td>9:15 - 11:15 a.m.</td>
<td>History Museum</td>
<td>Jennifer - Titanic - Basis for Int-HMJ2</td>
<td>15-09-98</td>
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<tr>
<td>INT - HMG1</td>
<td>24-03-98</td>
<td>7:30 - 9:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Gord's Club</td>
<td>Jennifer Interview 1</td>
<td>19-11-98</td>
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<td>INT - HMJ2</td>
<td>25-03-98</td>
<td>11:30 a.m.- 1:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Cafe</td>
<td>Jennifer Interview 2</td>
<td>15-09-98</td>
</tr>
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<td>CODE</td>
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<td>TIME</td>
<td>PLACE</td>
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<td>FN - AGJ1</td>
<td>02-04-98</td>
<td>10:30 a.m. - 12 p.m.</td>
<td>Art Gallery</td>
<td>Joan - Inuit</td>
<td>22-04-98</td>
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<td>INT - HMG2</td>
<td>08-04-98</td>
<td>7:15 - 9:15 p.m.</td>
<td>Gord's Club</td>
<td>Gord Interview 2</td>
<td>11-98</td>
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<td>FN - AGB1</td>
<td>11-04-98</td>
<td>1:00 - 2:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Art Gallery</td>
<td>Bern - General</td>
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<td>INT - HMH1</td>
<td>16-04-98</td>
<td>12:30 - 2:15 p.m.</td>
<td>Restaurant</td>
<td>Helen Interview 1</td>
<td>03-12-98</td>
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<td>FN - AGJ2</td>
<td>17-04-98</td>
<td>10:30 a.m. - 12 p.m.</td>
<td>Art Gallery</td>
<td>Joan - First Nations</td>
<td>09-03-99</td>
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<td>FN - AGW1</td>
<td>17-04-98</td>
<td>12:30 - 2:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Art Gallery</td>
<td>Walt - Landscape</td>
<td>04-05-98</td>
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<td>FN - AGB2</td>
<td>19-04-98</td>
<td>2:30 - 3:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Art Gallery</td>
<td>Bern - Special Exhibit - Basis for Int-AGB2</td>
<td>09-03-99</td>
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<td>22-04-98</td>
<td>10:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Joan's Home</td>
<td>Joan Interview 1</td>
<td>09-03-99</td>
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<tr>
<td>FN - HMH3</td>
<td>24-04-98</td>
<td>12:00 - 2:00 p.m.</td>
<td>History Museum</td>
<td>Helen - Titanic - Basis for Int-HMH2/H3</td>
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<td>INT - AGB1</td>
<td>28-04-98</td>
<td>2:00 - 4:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Bern's Home</td>
<td>Bern Interview 1</td>
<td>02-12-98</td>
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<td>INT - HMH2</td>
<td>30-04-98</td>
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<td>Helen's Home</td>
<td>Helen Interview 2</td>
<td>28-11-98</td>
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<td>FN - AGW2</td>
<td>01-05-98</td>
<td>10:00 - 11:30 a.m.</td>
<td>Art Gallery</td>
<td>Walt - Ways of Seeing</td>
<td>11-06-98</td>
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<td>FN - AGB3</td>
<td>03-05-98</td>
<td>1:00 - 2:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Art Gallery</td>
<td>Bern - General</td>
<td>21-05-98</td>
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<td>05-05-98</td>
<td>10:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Walt's Home</td>
<td>Walt Interview 1</td>
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<td>INT - HMG3</td>
<td>06-05-98</td>
<td>12:00 p.m. - 1:15 p.m.</td>
<td>Cafe</td>
<td>Gord Interview 3</td>
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<td>FN - AGJ3</td>
<td>07-05-98</td>
<td>10:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Art Gallery</td>
<td>Joan - Landscape - Basis for Int-AGJ2</td>
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<td>INT - AGOTHER</td>
<td>20-05-98</td>
<td>2:00 - 4:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Art Gallery</td>
<td>Docent Coordinator - Interview</td>
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<td>22-05-98</td>
<td>10 a.m. - 1 p.m.</td>
<td>Restaurant</td>
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<td>02-12-98</td>
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<td>26-05-98</td>
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<td>26-05-98</td>
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<td>05-06-98</td>
<td>10:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.</td>
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<td>Joan Interview 2</td>
<td>09-03-99</td>
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<td>FN - AGW3</td>
<td>12-06-98</td>
<td>12:30 - 1:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Art Gallery</td>
<td>Walt - General Tour</td>
<td>18-06-98</td>
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<td>INT - NCA3</td>
<td>16-06-98</td>
<td>4:00 - 6:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Cafe</td>
<td>Alice Interview 3 - Based on FN-NCA6</td>
<td>11-02-99</td>
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<td>INT - HMH3</td>
<td>18-06-98</td>
<td>1:30 - 2:45 p.m.</td>
<td>Cafe</td>
<td>Helen Interview 3 - Based on FN-HMH3</td>
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<td>FN - AGW4</td>
<td>19-06-98</td>
<td>10:00 - 11 a.m.</td>
<td>Art Gallery</td>
<td>Walt - General Tour - Basis for Int-AGW2</td>
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<td>INT - AGW2</td>
<td>30-06-98</td>
<td>10:00 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Walt's Home</td>
<td>Walt Interview 2 - Based on FN-AGW4</td>
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<tr>
<td>CASE - JOAN</td>
<td>22-01-99</td>
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<td>NOTES - ALICE</td>
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<td>CASE - JENNIFER</td>
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<td>No response</td>
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