

Developing Gallery Outreach Policy: A Collaborative Process

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ABSTRACT

Developing Gallery Outreach Policy: A Collaborative Process

Natasha Reid

This research developed a framework for collaborative art education between art galleries and community groups in order to inform art gallery and museum outreach educational programming policy development. The objective of this process was to discover a means to effectively foster the development of a collaborative vision for socially inclusive programming between a gallery and a community group. The proposed framework was implemented through a collaboration between La Centrale Galerie Powerhouse and the Immigrant Workers Centre. Qualitative methods used in this research included a focus group meeting, an interview and a written reflection from the three collaborating members—the gallery programmer, the gallery educator and the community group facilitator. The data from these methods served as the basis for the discussion and analysis of the framework’s efficacy through the fulfillment of the goals, effectiveness of the dialoguing processes and the inclusive nature of the project. This process resulted in recommendations for collaborative art gallery educational processes through the refinement of the proposed framework.

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CENTRALE BEGINNINGS

Chapter 1: Introduction

Introducing the Research Question

This thesis examines the processes involved in a collaborative art program between an art gallery and a community group—La Centrale Galerie Powerhouse [La Centrale] and the Skills for Change program at the Immigrant Workers Centre [IWC]—in an effort to inform policy development for community outreach programs in both art galleries and museums. I am currently engaged as the co-director of the outreach educational program at La Centrale called the *Comité Quartier*—the Neighbourhood Committee—program. The focus of this program is to promote participation in the gallery from community groups consisting of individuals who are dealing with social concerns as a group and who do not fit the profile of those who traditionally frequent art galleries and museums. I will refer to these individuals as *new visitors*.

It is a goal at La Centrale to develop dialogue-based, collaborative initiatives. For this reason the gallery programmer and I decided to encourage a strong dialogue and collaborative effort to evolve between La Centrale and the community educators from the groups participating in the program. At the conception point of this dialogue-based, collaborative program, it was essential to investigate how galleries can effectively formulate a collaborative vision for a socially inclusive program with educators from local community groups. A framework for collaborative educational programming in art galleries and museums, which is heavily based on dialogue, was posited and developed in this thesis. This framework was founded on my belief that for art galleries and museums

to create positive and empowering experiences for new visitors, they need to actively include community groups in the conception of, the implementation of, and the reflection on the program. The facilitator for the Skills for Change program was the representative for the Skills for Change community group and was involved in all three areas through: participating in an initial dialoguing process with La Centrale; being actively included in the implementation of the program; and participating in a reflective dialoguing process with the gallery.

About La Centrale and the Comité Quartier

La Centrale is a non-profit gallery and artist-run centre in Montreal. La Centrale was founded in 1973 by a group of women artists, with the intention of enabling contemporary art created by women to be more accessible to the public (La Centrale Galerie Powerhouse [LCGP], 2004, para. 3). The gallery grew out of the feminist art movement and its current mandate illustrates its goal to engage a “broad spectrum of underrepresented artists and their initiatives within established art institutions” (LCGP, 2007a). La Centrale aims to provide a platform for discourses surrounding art, feminism and multidisciplinary interests. In order to achieve these aims, La Centrale “attempts to represent the interests of its constantly changing community” and to “establish a dialogue with various cultures and art communities” (Regroupement des Centres d’Artistes Autogérés du Québec [RCAAQ], 2002, p. 82). According to the RCAAQ (2002), La Centrale has achieved this through encouraging collaborations between artists and communities, professional exchanges and partnerships with organizations.

In an effort to further this dialogue between the gallery and its community, La Centrale has decided to implement the Comité Quartier program, which is a program that aims to encourage community groups of new visitors to encounter contemporary artists, art, and galleries through workshops at La Centrale. The gallery is aiming to encourage a wide variety of as many new visitors as possible to participate in the gallery through this program. The Comité Quartier program is collaborative in nature and strives to create positive encounters at the gallery that draw upon the past experiences of its participants and fulfill the needs of each community group in a welcoming environment. We are aiming to stimulate interest in contemporary art, contemporary art spaces and the arts and cultural community for our new visitors in a non-elitist manner.

About the Immigrant Workers Centre and Skills for Change

The Immigrant Workers Centre of Montreal was founded in 2000 by a group of Filipino-Canadian “union and former union organizers and their activist and academic allies” (Immigrant Workers Centre [IWC], 2006b, para. 1). The centre was created to offer a safe environment outside of the workplace where workers could discuss their personal situations (IWC, 2006b, para. 3). The IWC provides counseling on rights, popular education and political campaigns. This organization asserts that “labour education is a priority, targeting organizations in the community and increasing workers’ skills and analyses” (IWC, 2007, para. 1).

The Skills for Change program at the IWC works towards teaching individuals basic computer literacy, in order to assist them in learning more about labour rights, and to help them find work or succeed in their current jobs. The program “incorporates

workplace analysis and information on rights” while teaching computer skills (IWC, 2006b, para. 3). The program also creates a connection between the struggles of immigrant workers and other social and economic struggles, with the intention of building alliances (IWC, 2006b, para. 3).

Collaborations between La Centrale and the Immigrant Workers Centre

The Immigrant Workers Centre and La Centrale began to collaborate during the summer of 2006. I discovered the IWC through a fellow art educator and community worker who was employed as the educator for the Skills for Change Program. We decided to embark on a collaboration between the IWC and La Centrale, which became the first project for the Comité Quartier program. The intention of this collaboration was to create a positive, relevant experience for the participants, founded upon the goals and needs of both organizations. A preliminary meeting between the educator of the Skills for Change program, the programming coordinator at La Centrale, the programming assistant at La Centrale and I allowed us to identify links between each organization’s goals, and to create a project that fulfilled these goals. The IWC demonstrated that they wanted the Skills for Change participants to experience art in a way that incorporated the acquirement of computer skills. La Centrale expressed a desire to present contemporary art and art spaces to the community group through a dialogue-based, non-elitist approach. In order to fulfill these two organizations’ goals, a workshop based upon contemporary photography and the use of digital cameras was developed and implemented. Three representatives from La Centrale visited the Skills for Change group at the IWC. The Skills for Change group was introduced to ideas associated with contemporary

photography, was provided with a demonstration on the use of digital cameras, worked with digital cameras in order to produce portraits of each other and were instructed on the processes involved in the uploading of digital images on computers and the use of file attachments in email programs. The images were presented at La Centrale during the final ceremony for the participants' completion of the Skills for Change program, which included the participants and a number of their family members and friends. This project was carried out during the summer of 2006 and was deemed a success by both organizations.

During the spring of 2007, I decided to further the relationship that had begun between the IWC and La Centrale by engaging both groups in another project, and to document the process for this thesis. The main objective was to create a project that incorporated associations between each organization's goals, thereby creating a positive, relevant experience for the participants. The two organizations met to create a project and a plan, implemented the project and reflected on the experience after its completion.

The Exhibition: Orientité

The collaborative workshop for this thesis was based on the *Orientité* exhibit at La Centrale from May 18th until June 10th 2007. This exhibit centered on issues surrounding the adoption of Asian—particularly Korean—children in Western countries. The main issues explored were identity, displacement, cultural heritage and how art can be utilized to explore these areas.

The three artists—Adel Kim Gouillon, Jane Jin Kaisen and Mihee-Nathalie Lemoine—originated from Asian countries and are Asian in appearance, but were

adopted at very young ages in European countries. Thus, their “upbringing does not reflect their said culture” (LCGP, 2007b, para. 2). These artists create art in order to attempt “to recall and reconstruct a ‘whitened’ and erased identity” (LCGP, 2007b, para. 2). The three artists utilize their personal creativity in defining their developing identities.

The exhibition was a result of a collaboration between the three artists. It consisted of photographs of the artists as adults, holding their adoption numbers, and the embassies and agencies connected to their adoptions. Other photographs taken of the artists in Montreal were exhibited.

This exhibit was chosen for the collaboration between the Immigrant Workers Centre and La Centrale for three reasons: for its inherent collaborative nature; for its connection to issues dealt with at the Immigrant Workers Centre, including identity, displacement, and cultural heritage; and for the photographic medium employed, since this medium has the potential to be explored digitally through the use of computers, connecting to the Skills for Change program’s goal to improve participants’ computer skills for the workforce.

Personal Significance of this Research

My passion for fostering inclusive environments started at an early age, and stems from my experiences as an individual with a multicultural ethnic background. This interest blossomed during my high-school years. I became involved in a council that dealt with racism in my high-school and in my local community, I was involved with volunteer projects outside of my high-school and I started to focus on issues of race and

peacemaking efforts in my studio practice. This led me to become an art educator at an inner-city community centre in Toronto during my undergraduate degree, to work with community groups and galleries throughout Montreal during my graduate studies and to continue a studio practice dealing with racial issues and peacemaking.

The world of art galleries and museums is another strong area of interest for me. I had many positive experiences with museums as a young child, which continued throughout my adolescence and flourished during my university career. For me, art museums and galleries are places where my personal experiences, knowledge and beliefs have a chance to intermingle with ideas circulating in society, where art acts as the vehicle for the exchange. These experiences are possible for me because I feel comfortable attending museums and galleries.

I have observed that not everyone feels this sense of comfort in art spaces. Those who do not feel comfortable with the idea of visiting art spaces are not able to have the positive experiences that I have encountered in such institutions. This is unfortunate since during my work as a community art educator, as an art gallery researcher and as an art gallery educator, I have observed a great potential for new visitor groups to benefit from visits to art spaces, given the appropriate programming. These areas of interest, experiences and observations prompted me to find a gallery that has similar concerns. I have been fortunate enough to find such a gallery—La Centrale. In February of 2006 I became the co-director and co-creator for La Centrale's community outreach program. Working at this gallery has fulfilled my desire to work with populations that do not typically attend galleries. The intention of the program is for new visitors to have

positive and meaningful experiences with contemporary art as I did when I was a child, and as I continue to experience today—that is, where one feels included.

Throughout my experiences of working in art galleries and with community groups I observed a need for research on the processes involved in outreach gallery programming in order to inform policy development. This research is intended to influence my practice as an art educator, art museum worker and researcher.

Significance for Art Gallery Education and Community Education

Today's art galleries are challenged "to increase community involvement; and to build stronger and more diverse visitor audiences" (King, 1998, p. 1). Educational programming that has been formatted for community groups consisting of individuals who do not tend to visit galleries—new visitor groups—by a variety of gallery workers and representatives from community groups can assist in this process. Researching the issues and processes involved in formulating such programming will benefit the art gallery and museum community, community groups and thus, society as a whole.

Art museums have begun a great transformation that attempts to "expand the vision of museums' purpose and possibilities and connect them with their communities" (Pitman & Hirzy, 2004, p. 7). Blandy and Congdon (1993) call for educational and cultural institutions to become "more diligent in making connections with the communities in which they are located" (p. 62). Richard Sandell (1999) outlines the importance of diversifying museum audiences through programming that connects to new visitors in stating that:

Museums that can demonstrate their potential to regenerate communities, tackle both the symptoms and causes of disadvantage, and play a part in achieving social objectives other than those traditionally assigned to museums, will enjoy more widespread support and access to increased resources. (p. 31)

Through implementing the strategies that will evolve throughout this thesis to gallery outreach educational programming, the vision of the art gallery and the vision of its community group will have a heightened potential to connect through a collaborative effort. Through collaboratively working towards defining what these groups want to achieve, the art gallery will have a greater opportunity to create more comprehensive and inclusive programming for its new visitors. This research could provide art museum and art gallery researchers and professionals with a prototype for a theoretical and practical guide to developing collaborative educational programming, and an in-depth look at how to examine and program for the needs of selected visitors.

This thesis is based on a specific project, providing a concrete example for inclusive practices in galleries and museums. Margaret Mackechnie, an assistant director of social services, has stated that “it is through examples of specific projects that colleagues within the social sector can begin to understand the potential of museums, and, in time, that will filter through the organization” (Dodd & Sandell, 2001, p. 117). Through targeting community groups comprised of new visitors in the inclusive manner explored in this specific project example, art museums and galleries will have the opportunity to reach more visitors, increasing their public reception, and fulfilling a common mission to reach a diverse public.

The art museum and the public art gallery are public institutions meant for all of society. However, many individuals do not feel welcomed in these spaces. Giroux indicates that through collaborative processes, communities that would be excluded will have a chance to define and use the “space between the state and private existence” (as cited in Blandy & Congdon, 1993, p.63). The collaborative programming strategy to be explored in this research aims to provide an educational experience that is formatted to communicate with groups of new visitors, making art museums and galleries more accessible and welcoming to these groups. This will enable community groups and art galleries and museums to engage in a greater amount of and more fruitful dialogue than what is currently occurring.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The following topic areas informed this research and will be explored in this chapter: 1) History of Art Museum Education, 2) Art Museum Outreach Community Education, 3) Social Inclusion Theory, 4) Collaboration, 5) Dialogue, and 6) Projects Related to Content.

History of Art Museum Education

The museum began as a repository for the display of valuable objects in the eighteenth century. Jeffers (2003) notes that during this time wealthy collectors and European imperial nations would present the “exotic and valuable objects of their conquests,” (p. 110) which demonstrated their “accumulated wealth and extent of their international influence” (p. 110) to an interested public. In the second half of the nineteenth century, science and industrialization progressed and drastically altered life in cities. Governments started to assume a greater responsibility for social services and education. Hein (1998) asserts that the museum was seen as one institution that could provide education to the public, with its unique ability to incorporate original tangible objects into the educational process. Sandell (1999) has noted that by the mid nineteenth century “museums were recognized as potential instruments of the state with a role to play in containing anarchy and social disorder” (p. 31). However, there have been criticisms of the nineteenth-century museum having been “torn between their educational goals and a more elitist, exclusive tradition” (Hein, 1998, p. 5). The attempts to utilize the museum for educational and social reconstruction purposes were passive, where positive educational and social outcomes would be obtained by simply “opening museums to the masses” (Sandell, 1999, p. 31). By not actively working to include

diverse audiences, the museum audience remained primarily composed of an educated and wealthy minority. Many scholars believe that this tendency to practice exclusory procedures is still lingering in today's museums. Fleming (2002) examined this unfortunate tradition of exclusion within the museum world:

...Museums have restricted themselves to serving the interests of an educated and prosperous minority, which has jealously guarded its privileged access. Museums became publicly funded, yet private and exclusive clubs, annexed by self-seeking interests because of the museum's cultural authority and power. (p. 213)

This elitist tendency can be observed throughout the museums' traditional workings: depictions of a sole point of view in a dictatorial manner, the charging of costly entrance fees, the intimidating grandiose architectures, the inclusion of jargon in the educational material, the invitation-only events, and so on (Reid, 2006). The traditional museum does not provide an inviting setting for the majority of society; rather it caters to a wealthy, scholarly few (Coles, 1974).

It has been suggested that museums' approaches to education and policy parallel changes in the political philosophies dominating at any given point in history (Hein, 1998). Recently, society has undergone a great change, altering its needs (King, 1998). Within this change, "building social capital and social networks is critical" (Holman Conwill & Marmion Roosa, 2003, p.42). Governments have been contributing money to social inclusion measures in an effort to comply with these societal changes (Carrington, 1999). In order to reflect society's new needs and to fulfill the goals of increased funding in the area of social inclusion, many museums have attempted to begin a process of re-designing that includes the aim to increase their community involvement and to create

stronger audiences consisting of greater diversity (King, 1998). Andrews and Hayward (1994) have noted that “the cumulative effect of these changes is that museums are compelled to demonstrate their relevance to the communities they serve” (p. 62). In order to reach as many individuals as possible within these communities, Lockett (1985) has noted that:

...Some galleries are beginning to discover and cultivate a new public, individuals and groups of people who do not fit into the traditional pattern of gallery visitors and who require galleries to reconsider their priorities and their attitudes to art and to the public. (p. 140)

Lockett outlines the importance of this change, stating that:

If galleries are to survive far into the twenty-first-century and if they are to have any real significance for twenty-first-century people, then they have got to take a positive attitude to their public and to rethink their purpose. (p. 140)

The *Excellence and Equity* report issued by the American Association of Museums [AAM] (1991) elucidates this change in attitude and purpose of museums, calling for museums to “expand their role as educational institutions, especially with regard to culturally diverse audiences” (p. 2). In order to foster this new attitude and reach new communities of visitors, many museums have begun to implement community outreach educational programming, targeting community groups of new visitors.

Art Museum Outreach Community Education

The Excellence and Equity report asks for museums to establish and maintain the “broadest possible public dimension” for themselves (AAM, 1991, p. 15). The report

continues this notion in stating that museums “must make a concerted long-term effort to become involved with our communities and to inaugurate programs that are responsive to the needs and wishes of our potential constituents” (AAM, 1991, p. 16).

In 2003, eighty-five American art museums completed an online survey for *Museum-Ed*—a non-profit organization dedicated to providing a dialogue forum for museum educators—regarding the main types of programs offered by their education departments. One hundred percent of the respondents indicated that their museums have some form of community, adult, and/or family programming (Museum-Ed, 2007). Forty-three and a half percent of this result fit into the ‘other’ category encompassing community education, indicating the prevalence and importance of such programs in twenty-first century museums (Museum-Ed, 2007). These programs reach out to community organizations, which cover a variety of establishments, ranging from voluntary organizations to professional service agencies to informal groups (Ratcliff, 2003). Such groups often contain individuals who do not typically frequent museums. Thus, the implementation of community education programs in museums works towards fulfilling the Excellence and Equity report’s recommendation for museums to “identify specific segments of the community that the museum would like to serve more fully” and “initiate programs to involve them in substantive ways” (AAM, 1991, p. 16). In this way, the report calls for museums to concentrate on inclusive practices.

Social Inclusion Theory

Sandell (2002) has noted that “museums and galleries of all kinds have both the potential to contribute towards the combating of social inequality and a responsibility to

do so” (p. 3). He has stated that museums, along with all publicly funded organizations, have a “moral obligation to consider their potential to combat discrimination and disadvantage” (Sandell, 1999, p. 30). Sandell views the museum as being able to have a positive impact on disadvantaged or marginalized individuals on a number of levels (Sandell, 2002). In order for such positive outcomes to be achieved, museums must actively and diligently work to “broaden audiences and remove barriers to museum visiting” rather than the passive approach taken from the mid-nineteenth century onwards (Sandell, 1999, p. 31).

Sandell (2002) proposes an active and holistic framework for social inclusion within museums that aims to incorporate new visitors in museum education in an inclusive manner. He emphasizes that working towards social inclusion needs to be emphasized in all areas of the museum world. However, Sandell does specifically outline the importance of reaching out to community cultural organizations in this effort. Sandell (2002) views museums as being able to reach new visitors through actively working towards enabling community groups to have a “face-to-face interaction” (p. 7) with the museum. This framework is intended to provide a ground upon which social agency—“the ability to influence and affect society” (Sandell, 2002, p. 3)—can be further explored.

This model maintains that museums have the potential to contribute to fighting the causes and improvement of the “symptoms of social inequality and disadvantage at three levels: with individuals, specific communities and wider society” (Sandell, 2002, p. 4).

The Individual

Sandell (2002) demonstrates that museums have the potential to impact individuals on a variety of levels, including: personal, psychological, emotional and pragmatic. Sandell notes that in order for museums to impact individuals in a positive manner on these levels, museum programs need to be created with a “focus on bringing benefit to the individual and enhancing their quality of life, rather than the museum” (p. 6). Sandell argues that an effective manner to reach individuals is via community organizations.

The Community

Sandell (2002) outlines the potential areas that museums can impact upon specific, geographically defined communities as including “enhanced community self-determination and increased participation in decision-making processes and democratic structures” (p. 7). In reference to reaching out to the community, Sandell notes the importance of museums engaging with community groups. He states that “it appears that cultural organizations, in comparison with other agencies, might be uniquely positioned to act as catalysts for community involvement and as agents for capacity building” (Sandell, 2002, p. 7). Cultural organizations are inclusive and have a unique ability to open dialogue between individuals and to nurture individuals’ enthusiasm and dedication to causes. Sandell (2002) demonstrates the potential for empowerment for community groups engaging with museums through stating:

...Those project experiences that have been documented point to the potential for museums to engage and enable groups that have previously been deprived of

decision-making opportunities. Museums have provided an enabling, creative, perhaps less threatening forum through which community members can gain the skills and confidence required to take control and play an active, self-determining role in their community's future. (p. 7)

Thus, Sandell believes that the museum is uniquely positioned to impact individuals in a positive manner through connecting with community groups.

The Society

Sandell (2002) notes that although it is difficult to determine the impact museums can have on society, museums are “undeniably implicated in the dynamics of (in)equality and the power relations between different groups through their role in constructing and disseminating dominant social narratives” (p. 8). Museums are obligated to take responsible roles as participants in society.

The Means

Sandell (2002) outlines that museums need to “deploy their social agency and cultural authority in a way that is aligned and consistent with the values of contemporary society” (p.18) via a methodology that responds to our “diverse and rapidly changing society” (p. 19). A strong value that is currently circulating in society is social inclusion—that is, society is searching for ways to incorporate individuals and groups that are being or have recently been marginalized from society. Society is responding to social exclusion by employing more inclusive practices (Sandell, 1999). A methodology that Sandell (1999) promotes and that many museums are currently employing is

collaboration. Collaboration can be defined as an experience where “each person in the group provides his or her contribution to the joint learning effort” (Leonard, 2002, p. 30). Sandell (1999) notes that museums are increasingly recognizing the need to address issues of social inclusion and exclusion more holistically through “working in partnership with other organizations as part of a multi-agency approach” (p. 31). Carrington (1999) observes that partnerships are the key to fighting social exclusion in museums. Sandell and Dodd (2001) suggest that in order for a museum to incorporate the concept of social inclusion in an effective manner, museums need to “involve communities and engage them in decision making processes” (p. 4). Sandell (2002) illustrates that this is most often achieved in an effective manner through partnerships with “agencies that have direct links with, and knowledge of, the group with which the museum is engaged” (p. 7). Museums need to utilize techniques that promote effective collaboration in order to fulfill these scholars’ pleas for social inclusion in museums.

Collaboration

Blandy and Congdon (1993) state that in order to “secure our survival and our mental health we must depend on each other” (p. 61). They view art as being able to “promote community reconstruction as people find new ways to relate to each other” (Blandy & Congdon, 1993, p. 61). These scholars “believe that society’s educational and cultural institutions, and those that work within them, must be more diligent in making connections with the communities in which they are located” (Blandy & Congdon, 1993, p. 62). Thus, they call for collaborative partnerships between art organizations and other organization located within their communities. Likewise, Williams Rutherford (2005)

outlines the importance of collaborative partnerships in community-related arts programs in stating that “community-focused pedagogy is best served by the combined expertise of many” (p. 15). MacGregor (1993) defines a collaborative partnership as being “one in which each of two or more parties contributes to, and receives benefits from an enterprise” (p. 4). Blandy and Congdon (1993) note that in order for such projects to enable benefits in this manner, we need to work towards understanding each other’s language and from that, formulate a new one that can result in better communication.

Wenger’s (1998) concept of *Communities of Practice* is a model for collaboration that centres on the exchange and formulation of language that Blandy and Congdon call for. This model focuses on the decision making process involved in collaborations. Communities of Practice is an active and inclusive framework for negotiating visions that can assist in ensuring that the voice of each individual participating in the process is valued and incorporated in a sensitive manner, fulfilling goals associated with social inclusion theories. Communities of Practice is a structure heavily based on collaboration amongst a group of individuals—a community. Wenger proposes that there are three characteristics of the community that should be acknowledged by the entire community prior to embarking on decision making. The first characteristic proposed by Wenger (1998) is mutual engagement—where “people are engaged in actions whose meanings they negotiate with one another” (p. 73)—that is, actually getting the group to mutually interact with one another. The second characteristic of the community of practice is the negotiation of a joint enterprise—a series of goals and ideas surrounding accountability that are mutually negotiated. The final characteristic is a shared repertoire—“a community’s set of shared resources” (Wenger, 1998, p. 83) for negotiating meaning.

This step attempts to ensure that the methods of communication (ex. language, symbols, and concepts) are understood and can be employed by all members. This model requires a strong dialogue to evolve between individuals in order for proper communication and thus positive collaboration to develop. Dialoguing frameworks can be utilized in order to facilitate this in collaborative projects.

Dialogue

Slotte (2004) outlines two popular dialogue methods—the *Bohmian Method* and the *Socratic Method*—both of which view dialogue as an everyday practice rather than a philosophical theory and that “dialogue transforms human relationship by overcoming individual and cultural barriers for sharing meaning, values and understanding” (p. 5).

David Bohm

The Bohmian Method, developed by David Bohm, suggests that dialogue should focus on process rather than on content (Slotte, 2004). With this method, “a dialogue should not have predetermined agendas or a given content” (Slotte, 2004, p. 6). Some virtues that the Bohmian Method encourages to be developed by practitioners are: “listening, suspension of judgment, expressing, respecting,” along with “thinking together, encouraging others to speak, focus on the issue and not on personal character of other participants, winning together rather than winning for yourself, speaking from experience, and changing the point of view” (Slotte, 2004, p. 6). With the Bohmian Method for dialoguing, shared meaning, values and a sense of community evolves between participants. During this process, information and meaning that cannot be

individually accessed is found, new action is enhanced, and individuals are presented with collective meaning. Bohm (1996) states that if people are to cooperate—that is, to work together—they have to be able to “create something in common, something that takes shape in their mutual discussions and actions” (p. 3). He states that “a dialogue is something (more of) a common participation, in which we are not playing a game against each other, but with each other” (Bohm, 1996, p. 7). This type of dialogue enhances “thinking and communication skills that allows individuals to see systemic complexity and how attitude and position taken in a dialogue affect the whole group” (Slotte, 2004, p. 20). Slotte notes that these characteristics are believed to improve the efficacy of group interactions. Thus, the Bohmian Method for dialoguing is conducive to assisting collaborative practices.

Leonard Nelson

Leonard Nelson developed the Socratic Method of dialogue, which “is a way to engage people in an advanced philosophical dialogue” (Slotte, 2004, p. 8). Unlike Bohmian dialoguing, the Socratic Method focuses on a concept rather than the process. The centre of the Socratic Method is *regressive abstraction*, which is “an inquiry into participants everyday experiences and their understanding of these experiences by comparing, analyzing and seeing them in the light of general concepts they are founded on” (Slotte, 2004, p. 8). Slotte (2004) notes that in the Socratic Method of dialoguing there is a “concentrated focus on a given topic and the analytical approach” (p. 20). It starts with a question that is to be answered based on the personal experiences of the participants. The dialogue becomes increasingly more abstract until a core definition is

created. The advantages of Socratic Dialogue are that it provides structure to a dialogue about a particular issue and that participants work from personal experiences, eliminating speculation and the possibility of power struggles due to level of education or authority (Slotte, 2004). Thus, this method can assist in ensuring that participants in a collaborative partnership feel included and equal during dialoguing.

Projects Related to Content

The following section reviews projects that share similar goals and/or methods that are being explored in this thesis. These projects focus on social inclusion, community outreach, and collaboration, all in the context of museum education.

Museum programming has become increasingly concerned with reaching a more diverse public through implementing social inclusion strategies (Keenlyside, 2004). Keenlyside conducted a study at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts that examined the perceptions of five adult educators within the Montreal community network about the possibilities for transformative learning in community partnerships. Her project used Sandell's Social Inclusion Theory as a foundation point. At the time of her research, Keenlyside was an educator at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts. Her project was based upon action research, through which Keenlyside aimed to explore questions related to her personal experience. She conducted a series of individual audio-recorded personal interviews with the five adult educators. From analyzing the interview transcripts, Keenlyside determined that educators from the community bring their learners to the museum because they would like them to have a transformative engagement and to receive "complimentary learning that can be achieved in a new learning context"

(Keenlyside, 2004, p. 42). The community educators stressed that in order for this to occur, there is a need to “demystify museums and challenge the notion that museums cater to an exclusive few” (Keenlyside, 2004, p. 89). From examining the responses of the five interviewed educators Keenlyside noted that these educators feel that in order to work towards this demystification of the museum and the creation of more inclusive museums, “museums must engage and implicate keyworkers from other organizations in the process of programme development” (Keenlyside, 2004, p. 88).

There have been many programs that “reflect a belief in the social utility of museums,” demonstrating socially inclusive practices (Sandell, 2002, p. 6). Sandell (2002) outlines one such program—the training program founded by the Living Museum of the West, in Melbourne, Australia. This program presents an opportunity to provide training and skills development for local communities, especially those who belong to disadvantaged groups that have few opportunities to find employment. One of the projects executed by the Living Museum of the West was the Koorie Garden Project. This project aimed to provide employment to local indigenous people and to incorporate horticultural training. The project enabled participants to develop skills that would help them to gain employment. Thus, the project was based upon social inclusion, aiming to provide potentially empowering experiences for local communities of typically excluded individuals.

Prabhy (1982) examines The Museum in Schools program at the Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York, which is a program designed to introduce educators and students to the museum’s resources and to help integrate these into the school curricula. The program is open to any public, private or

special needs educational institution, preschool or special interest group. It consists of two workshops, one at the school and one on-site at the museum. The workshops relate works of art to interests and subject areas focused on in the particular groups through activities. The Museum in Schools program utilizes a model of collaboration in order to effectively collaborate with the schools. A collaborative planning session at the museum commences the process. During this time, museum educators inform the teachers about the museum and the teachers provide information about the school, the students and their needs, their objectives and their expectations regarding the museum experience. The museum educators suggest project ideas that fit the objectives and needs expressed by the teachers. The teachers play a strong role throughout the project. The role of the museum educators is to translate the teachers' needs and goals into the workshop. During the project, "the collaborative process is dependent on a sensitive balance of communication and organization" (Prabhy, 1982, p. 34). The museum educators and the school teachers "work together to provide learning experiences that will enhance both environments of learning: the classroom and the museum gallery" (Prabhy, 1982, p. 34).

The Heritage School—a public high school in East Harlem, New York City—and the Metropolitan Museum of Art (MET) collaborated on a project for the *Extreme Beauty: The Body Transformed* exhibit at the MET. Each of the collaborators—the cultural visits coordinator, the art teacher and the museum exhibition associate—had their own objectives associated with their distinct professional roles (Hochtritt, Lane, Bell Price, 2004, p. 35). The perspectives of each collaborator were examined, and links were found. Through ensuring that the voice of each collaborator was equally involved and valued, a successful collaboration evolved.

Chalas (2006) reviewed a partnership between the Canadian Centre for Architecture and Architects in Action, which is a group of volunteer architects who aim to elevate the status of architectural education in schools. Chalas conducted pre and post interviews, classroom observations, and teacher surveys in order to determine if the architects' expectations were met and the benefits and challenges associated with the partnership.

In an effort to promote educators at a contemporary art gallery to attempt to understand their practice as a group, Lemelin (2002) researched a process of action research. Focus group meetings were conducted before and after her participation in the workings of the gallery as an intern. Lemelin developed a framework for discussion in collaboration with the gallery educators during two focus group meetings. Through implementing a process of action research and a model for collaborative practices with a museum educational staff, Lemelin enabled a staff to “collaboratively assess museum education practice, define issues to be addressed, analyze results from research and determine changes and interventions” (2002, p. 22). Lemelin utilized Wenger’s framework for Communities of Practice with the gallery educators in order to promote effective collaboration.

The Program for Art Museums and Communities (PAMC), funded by The Pew Charitable Trusts, is a program that has “helped participating museums meet or surpass significant and wide-ranging goals for institutional change” (Pitman & Hirzy, 2004, p. 1). The PAMC was created to test models for innovative programming that were “intended to increase the participation and engagement of public audiences in art museums and rebuild community loyalty and support” (Pitman & Hirzy, 2004, p. 3). Participating

museums noted that in order to do this, they had to create alliances or reach underserved audiences.

These projects present a small sampling of the increased interest in community outreach projects, collaboration, and social inclusion strategies within the museum community.

CENTRALE HAPPENINGS

Chapter 3: Methodology

This study was a qualitative inquiry, in that, it was a “systematic process of describing, analyzing and interpreting insights discovered in everyday life” (Stokrocki, 1997, p. 34). Furthermore, the personal and social meanings discovered in this project were valued for themselves and the researcher was an important instrument, where her personal beliefs were an integral component in the study (Stokrocki, 1997). In this way, the research attempts to heighten our understandings of the studied field rather than to formulate generalizations.

This thesis used action research as a basis and tested the proposed *Framework for Active Inclusion*, where an initial dialogue, a workshop and a reflection ensued and were documented. Using qualitative interpretation—which is “concerned with uncovering the multilayered meanings of a phenomenon and understanding them more deeply” (Stokrocki, 1997, p. 36)—the framework was examined in relation to its ability to effectively create of a joint vision amongst a community of members. Through using qualitative interpretation, themes were isolated that elucidated the processes involved in effectively formulating a joint vision for socially inclusive programming between museums and community groups. This was with the intention of informing the development of outreach policies in galleries.

Action Research

Action research is a method of qualitative inquiry that pays particular attention to the active involvement of the researchers and their beliefs and current practices in an everyday life situation. In this form of research, the participants, including the primary researcher, become active researchers in an effort to “develop strategies and programs based on real life experience rather than theories or assumptions” (Barnsely & Ellis, 1992, p. 10). Such research gives an “analysis of issues based on a description of how people actually experience those issues” (Barnsely & Ellis, 1992, p. 13). This process enables the group to increase their understanding of the issues that they are dealing with and it is an opportunity for the participants to “work collectively and strengthen their connections with each other” (Barnsely & Ellis, 1992, p. 10). Action research “always implies a process of people interacting with one another” (McNiff, 2002, p. 16). Lemelin (2002) describes the aim of this form of research as being “personal improvement for social transformation” (p.7). Lemelin points out that due to this social nature, action research is “essentially collaborative” (p. 7). Thus, action research is conducive to assisting in collaborative undertakings. Therefore, action research was an ideal methodology to use in researching the implementation of the collaborative-based Comité Quartier program.

Since this thesis is intended to inform my professional practice as an active and integral member of the Comité Quartier program, it was important that I was an active participant in the practical application of the process rather than an outside member that intervened. McNiff (2002) notes action research’s ability to foster this through stating that “it is a practical way of looking at your practice in order to check whether it is as you

feel it should be” (p. 15). This reflective quality of action research made it appropriate to use in a project that piloted a new program and framework for its implementation.

According to McNiff (2002), action research “rests on ideas to do with truth, social justice, compassionate ways of living, respect for pluralistic forms” (p. 17). Thus, such research encourages principles connected with social inclusion strategies.

McNiff (2002) observes that “action research involves learning in and through action and reflection” (p. 15). It is a form of practice which includes the gathering of data, reflecting on an action as it is presented through the data, producing evidence from the data and then formulating claims to knowledge based upon the conclusions extrapolated from the evidence (McNiff, 2002). This reflective nature of action research fits in with and enhances the proposed framework for gallery outreach programming in this thesis.

Proposed Framework for Active Inclusion

Community groups often aim to achieve empowerment and inclusion in decision-making processes for their members. Therefore, in gallery outreach programming, it is appropriate to include their voice in each stage of the gallery visit. At the conception point of this thesis, I proposed that a framework that promotes socially inclusive, collaborative, and dialogue-based programming would assist galleries in creating effective and positive programming for community groups. The template I proposed was the Framework for Active Inclusion (fig. 1). This framework was founded on my assertion that for galleries to create positive and empowering experiences for their community groups of new visitors, galleries need to actively include the community

group in the conception of the program, the implementation of the program and the reflection on the program (Reid, 2006).

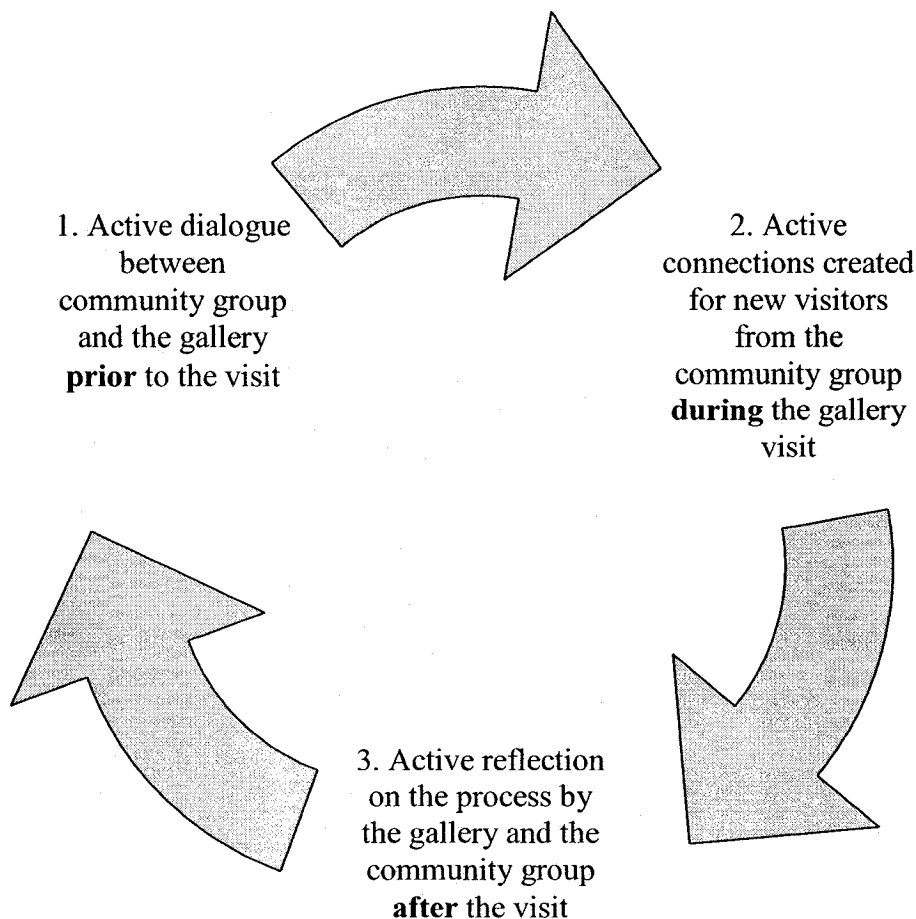


Figure 1. The Framework for Active Inclusion

In the first stage of the framework, the gallery engages in a dialogue with the community group prior to the group experiencing a visit at the gallery. This dialoging process includes the gallery education staff and the community group facilitator participating in a meeting prior to the workshop. The facilitator is able to pass the desires and needs of the community group on to the gallery during a dialoguing process where she acts as a representative for the community group. The goals of the community group

and the goals of the gallery are communicated during the dialogue. Links between these goals are extrapolated, pinpointing a joint vision. From there, both groups collaboratively work towards creating a workshop plan that fulfills these linked goals. During this process, the framework presented by Wenger (1998) can be utilized. When the three factors required for Wenger's Communities of Practice are met in the Framework for Active Inclusion, the community group, via the community group facilitator, and the gallery engage in a communication that actively incorporates each collaborator in a process of negotiation and understanding. This is in an effort to formulate a joint vision for a socially inclusive workshop. When utilizing such strategies, the initial stage of the Framework for Active Inclusion can be implemented in a democratic and thus successful manner (Reid, 2006).

The second stage in the Framework for Active Inclusion is the workshop for the community group. This workshop evolves out of the initial dialogue that discovers a joint vision through the common goals between the two collaborating groups. In this way both collaborators benefit from the workshop, fulfilling MacGregor's (1993) definition for collaborative undertakings—that is, an endeavor in which each of two or more groups obtains benefits from a project. The workshop connects the program content to the specific needs and desires of the community group of new visitors revealed in the first step of the process. Through observing that their ideas, their needs, their desires and complimentary learning experiences are being incorporated in the gallery workshop, the community group will have a greater chance of feeling included in the gallery and thus valued. This will increase the possibility for the group to encounter an empowering and positive gallery experience, adding to the possibility for fulfilling Sandell's plea for the

promotion of the community group's participation in decision-making processes, possibly encouraging participants to become active, empowered members in establishing how they should be included in society (Sandell, 2002; Reid, 2006).

The final stage of the Framework for Active Inclusion is a reflective process that examines the execution of the first and second steps, in an effort to inform future projects. This stage is of utmost importance in action research and for the assessment-nature of this thesis. Once the workshop has occurred, the museum educator embarks on a second dialoguing process with the community group facilitator to determine the positive and negative outcomes of the experience and whether or not the group's goals for the workshop were fulfilled. Likewise, the gallery educators reflect on the experience in the form of a written reflection in order to outline the positive and negative qualities of the experience and whether or not the goals for the experience, according to the gallery, were accomplished. From these results, the gallery has the opportunity to examine what worked, what needed improvement, how to improve, and ideas for future programming for community groups of new visitors—either the same group or new groups (Reid, 2006).

This reflective process can be carried out via David Kolb's *Model for Experiential Learning* (Fig. 2). The model provides a method for enabling a concrete experience—in this case, the initial dialoguing process and the gallery visit—to be used to guide the choices made in new experiences—future dialogues and gallery visits with community groups (Sugarman, 1985). Sugarman (1985) notes that Kolb views a concrete experience as being the “basis for observation and reflection from which concepts are assimilated and then actively tested” (p. 264). Actively testing yields a new concrete experience and

the cycle begins again. By utilizing Kolb's model, gallery educators will enter into the processes of the Framework for Active Inclusion with an acute and open mind in order to reflectively observe what they have experienced and attempt to "understand these observations and integrate them into logically sound theories" (Sugarman, 1985, p. 265) that they can actively experiment with during new encounters with the Framework for Active Inclusion. The Framework for Active Inclusion is cyclical in order to emphasize that the reflective process at the end will lead to a new awareness of practice for the gallery, which can be applied to new programming ventures—new concrete experiences—where the cycle will begin again (Reid, 2006).

The community group facilitator's responses are integral components in the gallery's reflective processes, informing how future programs will develop. The community group will have a chance to see that their opinions are important to the gallery and will become essential in determining future community group programming processes. In this sense, the community group facilitator and the gallery educator can be viewed as embarking on a process of action research. Barnsley and Ellis (1992) note the typical exclusive nature of society's workings: "We know that the majority view doesn't include everyone. Often it's the less powerful people who are excluded" (p. 14). Action research counters this exclusion by noting the importance of enabling each opinion to be heard and valued. By implicating the community group members in the process via the community group facilitator, the gallery has a chance to include the perceptions of the participants in their reflection on the program, making for a more holistic, inclusive approach to programming, and thus more effective future programming ventures (Reid, 2006).

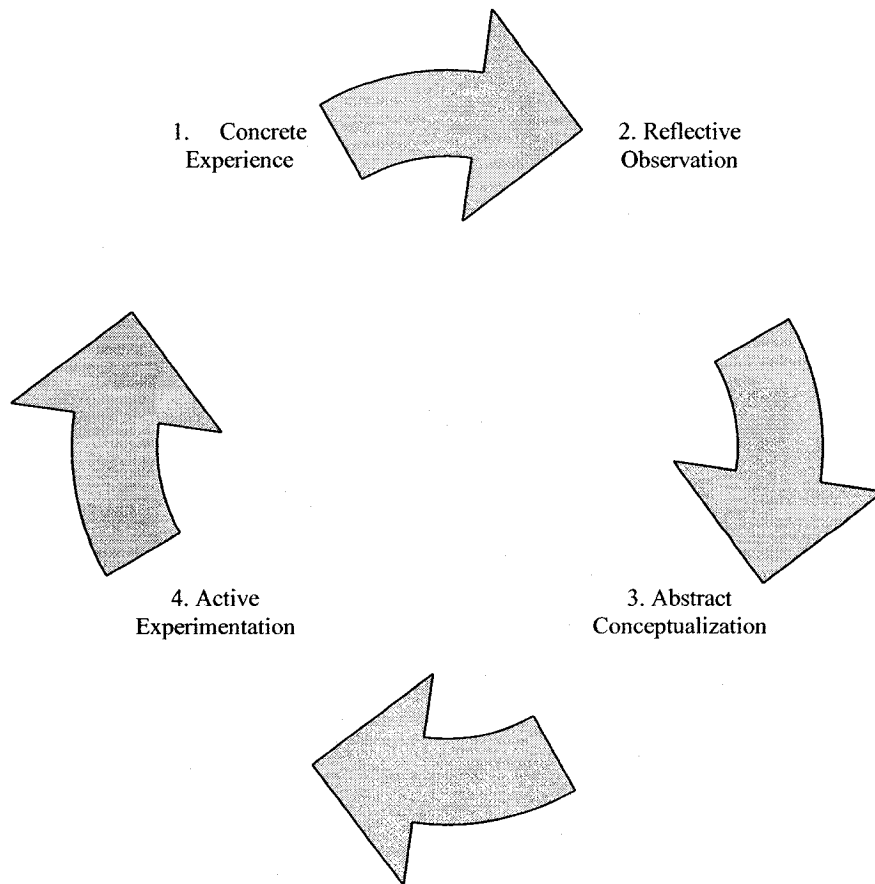


Figure 2. Model for Experiential Learning (Sugarman, 1985, p. 264).

The three stages of the Framework for Active Inclusion integrate the community group into the process, aiming to cater to the interests, goals and desires of the community group and to achieve the gallery's goals for community programming. This thesis puts the Framework for Active Inclusion into action, attempting to determine if it is an effective means for enabling galleries to successfully formulate collaborative visions for a socially inclusive programming with educators from local community groups, and ways to improve the framework.

Initial Dialogue

To implement the initial stage of the Framework for Active Inclusion in this thesis I conducted a focus-group meeting. Focus groups are a means to interviewing several people in order to “discuss a topic of mutual interest to themselves and the researcher” (Morgan & Spanish, 1984, p. 253). They are a way to draw upon individuals’ experiences in order to formulate a group’s perspective on an issue, making it an appropriate method for encouraging a dialogue that evokes the opinions, goals and perspectives of individual members in an effort to formulate a joint vision for socially inclusive programming (Barnsley & Ellis, 1992). This focus group was comprised of three participants: Roxanne—the programming assistant at La Centrale; Lindsay—the facilitator for the Skills for Change Program; and me—the outreach gallery educator at La Centrale. I compiled a set of topic areas that assisted the focus group in discovering their vision for outreach educational programming for the specific community group. These topic areas acted as catalysts and as guides in the process of dialogue, and incorporated the ideas for effective collaboration presented in Wenger’s framework. The dialogue was open, and lacked structure, employing a Bohmian dialoguing format, where I primarily acted as a facilitator, initiating and terminating the discussion. This format was chosen in order to provide a relaxed and unthreatening atmosphere. It was the community group facilitator’s first encounter with the environment of La Centrale and her first face-to-face meeting with the programming assistant and I. Thus, I wanted to ensure that she felt a sense of comfort, rather than experiencing anxiety often associated with an interview. The focus-group meeting was intended to be a dialogue where individuals could share their personal experiences, opinions and goals for their respective

organization—a ‘getting to know you’ session as well as an opportunity to formulate the workshop details.

The discussion took place at the gallery, since part of the purpose of this initial encounter was to introduce the community group facilitator to the gallery environment in order to be able to relay that information to her community group members before partaking in the art gallery visit. This occurred on the 19th of April, 2007. The length of the meeting was thirty minutes. Prior to embarking on the dialoguing process, I presented my research focus and goals for my project to the group. All participants agreed to have their names revealed in my thesis. The dialogue was recorded with an audio-recorder, and field notes were taken. The dialogue was then transcribed. The focus group participants were provided with a copy of the transcription and they were able to make any necessary changes, although none of the participants chose to do so.

The focus group results were analyzed in order to discover essential statements that could be placed into the following topic areas: connections between the organizations, information about the organizations, goals, and the process of creating the template for the workshop. This organization of topics was done in order to reveal the results that were pertinent in examining how effective this process is in collaborating towards a joint vision for a socially inclusive program.

Educational Programming Based on Dialogue

The workshop idea that grew out of the first dialogue was conducted on May 19th, 2007. It occurred over a one hour period at the gallery. The workshop was led by the programming assistant, the community group facilitator, the artists from the Orientité

exhibit, and myself—the gallery outreach educator. Through teaching and observing the workshop, I assumed the role of an action researcher. I took field notes after the experience, in order for me to be able to recall the experience when compiling the research findings and when answering the questions I posed for myself during the written reflection.

Reflections

On May 21st, 2007, I produced a written reflection that responded to open-ended questions that I had constructed. During this reflection I was acting as a representative for La Centrale, in an effort to determine the perspective the gallery had on the process. A written report was chosen for the gallery's reflection due to the fact that this is most likely the form that a post-workshop reflection would take in future collaborations with the Comité Quartier program, due to time constraints and the ability to retain a hard-copy for future reference.

On June 5th, 2007, the community group facilitator and I engaged in a one hour reflective dialogue. The reflection with the community group facilitator was a dialogue in order to fulfill the goal of ensuring that a strong dialogue developed between the gallery and the community group in the Framework for Active Inclusion. This dialogue was held in a public location in downtown Montreal. The dialogue was guided by structured, open-ended questions that were provided to the community group facilitator in advance, in order for her to have a chance to prepare for the dialogue. These questions asked the community group facilitator to reflect upon her personal experience during the initial dialoguing process and the workshop. Thus, this second, more structured dialogue was based upon principles associated with the Socratic Method. I chose to use this more

structured method of dialoguing after reviewing the results of the first dialogue. I wanted to be sure that this second, reflective dialogue remained focused and led to a fruitful reflection on the personal experiences. A positive, comfortable relationship evolved between the community group facilitator and me during the correspondence, meeting and workshop that had occurred in April and May of 2007. Therefore, I felt that she would feel comfortable participating in a more structured dialogue, and not intimidated by the interview-nature of the designed dialogue. This was also an opportunity for me to evaluate how different dialoguing methods work in the processes of creating and reflecting on a joint vision between a community group and a gallery. This dialogue was audio-recorded and transcribed. The community group facilitator was provided with a copy of the transcription and was invited to make any necessary changes, although she chose to leave the transcription as was when received.

As with the first dialogue, the results from the reflective dialogue and my written reflection were analyzed in order to find fundamental statements that could be examined in the following topic categories: the fulfillment of goals, the community group members' experiences, thoughts on collaboration and the dialoguing processes. The information was organized into these areas in an effort to highlight the results that were essential in examining how effective this process is in collaborating towards a joint vision for a socially inclusive program.

Chapter 4: Research Findings

This chapter will outline the research findings discovered during the initial dialoguing process, the implementation of the workshop, and the reflective responses.

Summary of the Initial Dialoguing Process

The initial dialoguing process enabled the three collaborators to share information about the two organizations, discover goals for each organization, make connections and translate these goals into a template for a workshop for the Skills for Change group at the gallery.

Sharing Information on the Two Organizations

I guided Roxanne towards explaining the general workings of La Centrale to Lindsay. Roxanne went over the definition of an artist-run centre, La Centrale's general history, how non-profit galleries work, and the function of the Comité Quartier program.

Lindsay then clarified the operations associated with the Immigrant Workers Centre and the Skills for Change Program.

Goals for Each Organization

Roxanne outlined the general goals for La Centrale. The main goal is to encourage non-elitist, welcoming encounters with contemporary art that enables a dialogue to evolve amongst visitors and between visitors and the gallery. She stated that the gallery is "looking at being non-elitist, inclusive and opening up and creating dialogue. Because I have a feeling that a lot of galleries are excluding people and people feel intimidated to go in" (focus-group meeting, April 19, 2007). Through this, La

Centrale encourages the evolution of critical thinking by means of art, and attempts to demonstrate that art can be enjoyable. Roxanne stated that the gallery “want(s) to show people that art can be fun, that they can be accepted and can have a judgment and a critical opinion on it” (focus-group meeting, April 19, 2007). Roxanne then proceeded to explain how this goal translated into the creation of the Comité Quartier program:

We decided to start a committee that would be about just having people come into the gallery and having a discussion rather than telling them what the art is about and really having their input on things and creating activities and workshops with them. So, that’s the whole goal of the Comité Quartier. It goes well with the fact that we moved here three and a half years ago to be on the street rather than in a building on the fourth floor, with all these other galleries, it didn’t make sense for us. Now we’re in a complete community, we have all sorts of people around us and we really want to reach out to them. (focus-group meeting, April 19, 2007.

Through describing the workings of the Immigrant Workers Centre, Lindsay presented the goals of the centre. According to Lindsay, the main goal of the IWC is to act as a support centre and information provider for immigrants regarding the workforce:

Basically, it is a centre for people to come and get information and get support in filing complaints against employers...to know their rights and the laws, and Quebec labour standards, which is often a foreign concept, especially for people who are new to the country. Even for people who have been here—most of us do not know what our rights are in the workplace. (focus-group meeting, April 19, 2007)

Lindsay described the primary goal of the Skills for Change program as being “to give people more skills, to become better equipped to find work” (focus-group meeting, April 19, 2007). She noted that this has expanded to include: “young kids who are not ready to enter the workforce yet, but, in the future it would still benefit them” (focus-group meeting, April 19, 2007) and older individuals who are most likely not working anymore, but want to learn.

Connections

Throughout the dialogue two strong links between the two organizations unfolded: connecting ideas associated with the exhibit and the previous collaboration between the two organizations.

Roxanne explained theories associated with the Orientité exhibit. Through this, it became apparent that there were many ideas inherent in the exhibit that connected with ideas circulating at the Immigrant Workers Centre and could pose a connection for the participants from the Skills for Change program. The medium was also noted as ideal for an introduction to contemporary art. Roxanne elucidated these thoughts through stating the following:

I think that is pretty interesting regarding identity and people coming from other countries. Since this is a photo-based exhibition, I think this is a good insight into contemporary art, because it is not too way out, it is still something that they know. So it is a non-classical way to show art, but still with a subject that relates to them. (focus-group meeting, April 19, 2007)

I also noted a link between the ideas in the exhibit and the IWC, stating that the Orientité exhibit can “be connected to ideas at the Immigrant Worker’s Centre” (focus-group meeting, April 19, 2007).

Lindsay was not employed at the Immigrant Workers Centre at the time of the previous collaborative project between Skills for Change and La Centrale, therefore Roxanne and I explained what occurred during the project. Through this, we demonstrated one way that the ideas circulating in the contemporary art world could be connected to the philosophies associate with the Skills for Change program—that is, through experimenting with digital photography and exploring the computer skills associated with the medium.

Translation into a project

Through reflecting upon the information, the goals, and the connections between the two organizations, a possible project idea was proposed. Roxanne demonstrated La Centrale’s goals for the project through stating “what we are looking forward to is to bring more people into the gallery and to have talks about the exhibitions, but we want to adapt it to the Skills for Change program at the same time” (focus-group meeting, April 19, 2007). Thus the project was intended to reflect the ideas and art associated with La Centrale and the Orientité exhibit, while fulfilling the goals associated with the Skills for Change program. A project idea was proposed by La Centrale, which grew out of the previous collaboration between the two organizations and which connected the exhibit and the Skills for Change program. We enabled our proposed idea to develop out of the previous exchange between the two organizations because we felt that it was successful.

Roxanne stated that “last time it worked well” (focus-group meeting, April 19, 2007).

Roxanne and I discussed this possible project idea prior to the focus-group meeting and presented it during the meeting since the idea clearly fit within the mandate, goals and ideas associated with the Immigrant Workers Centre and the Skills for Change Program that were emerging in the dialogue. Roxanne presented our idea to Lindsay.

So we were thinking to maybe have them here, have a talk on the exhibition—a talk about the medium and the way that it is presented, but also about the subject and how they relate to it. And, really have a talk, not just us talking about it. Then have them take, again, pictures. We would show them how a digital camera works. It is more about showing them that it can be easy. Showing them that it is technology, but it is not scary. What is fun about digital cameras is that you have the picture right away. Last time, what we did is gave them the cameras and showed them how it worked and then let them take pictures of themselves. It could be portraits, inspired by the exhibition, or, as Natasha was suggesting, is that they all come with food. It could be them with the food, it could be just the food, it could be an element, an object, jewelry, whatever reminds them of their country of origin... And, then we could project that on the wall or TV screen, showing them how to upload the pictures... Then we could send them to them and show them how to send attachments... We were thinking, if this works for you, we could also have a potluck at the end. They could even have their family come in. And during the potluck we could have the pictures that they took running in a slideshow, and just have it rolling in the background. (focus-group meeting, April 19, 2007)

Lindsay demonstrated how this idea connects the IWC and in the Skills for Change program. In reference to the project proposal, Lindsay noted that it “goes with the theme of identity” (Focus-group meeting, April 19, 2007). Lindsay was immediately attracted to the project idea and believed that it fit with the goals and mandate of her community group. She exclaimed, “Yes, I like that idea, a lot. It’s going to be perfect!” (focus-group meeting, April 19, 2007).

After logistics-related matters were discussed, I enquired about Lindsay’s expectations for the collaboration: “Do you have any concerns? Did you have any ideas about what you would like to happen during the project?” (focus-group meeting, April 19, 2007). Lindsay responded by stating “I didn’t. I wanted to talk to you guys to see what it is all about, and this sounds perfect, it really does” (focus-group meeting, April 19, 2007). I informed Lindsay that if she thought of any suggestions in the following weeks, she could contact me at any time for us to discuss the options. Lindsay responded by stating, “I will think about it, but it sounds good as it is” (focus-group meeting, April 19, 2007).

The La Centrale representatives believed the proposed workshop idea amalgamated the goals and philosophies of the two organizations. The community group facilitator was clearly enthralled with the proposed workshop, due to her belief that the concept linked the ideas and objectives of her organization with those of La Centrale. This proved that the initial process of collaboration was successful, enabling the second process to unfold through the implementation of the proposed workshop.

Description of the Translation of a Vision into a Workshop

Following the first dialogue, I compiled a lesson plan that melded the ideas presented by two organizations and the project proposal discussed during the initial dialogue. I contacted Lindsay two weeks prior to the implementation of the workshop in order to remind her to ask her students to bring a food or an object that reminded them of their country of origin and to bring food for the potluck.

The Skills for Change group gathered at the Immigrant Workers Center on Saturday May 19th and proceeded to La Centrale via the Montreal Metro System, guided by their community group facilitator, Lindsay. The group arrived in the late morning and consisted of Lindsay, and three participants. An introduction and motivation session ensued between the participants, Roxanne, the three main artists in the *Orientité* exhibit, and I. Roxanne introduced La Centrale and the concept of the artist-run centre to the group. I outlined the main ideas involved in the Comité Quartier program. The artists involved the group in a discussion about the concepts inherent in the exhibit, including adoption, identity, and displacement, and how these ideas are exposed in their art. During this portion of the workshop, the group encountered the exhibited art, having the opportunity to connect the artwork with the ideas presented by the artists and their own personal past experiences.

The art production section of the workshop conducted by Roxanne and me, and assisted by Lindsay, began after the above-described motivation session. Roxanne and I introduced the foods that we brought with us that represented our parents' countries of origin. We each described how we are connected to this food through briefly exploring our personal stories related to these foods and our origins. We then asked the community

group participants to share stories related to the objects that they brought with them. Only one participant brought an object and explained his connection to the object. Due to this, we altered the art-making to focus more on individual portrait-work, rather than portraits with objects brought by the participants. I gave a brief introduction to the history of photography and contemporary portrait-work. Roxanne conducted a demonstration of digital photography. The participants then took portraits of each other with the provided digital cameras. Once each participant had taken several photos, we gave a technical demonstration on how to transfer the images to the computer and how to attach image files to emails. The participants worked from their personal email accounts that had been created in previous classes during the Skills for Change program.

The response session was held in the backyard of La Centrale and was conducted over a potluck. I had compiled a set of questions for this portion of the workshop, but chose to allow the discussion to grow since it was so closely connected to the workshop and had very rich, personal and relevant material involved. This dialogue centered on identity, travel, displacement and new beginnings.

Lindsay was provided with a compact disc copy of the images produced by the participants. Information about upcoming workshops and exhibits at La Centrale were distributed to the participants.

The level of success, in terms of the ability of the results of the initial dialogue to be translated into the workshop—that is, the ability for a collaborative vision for socially inclusive programming to be achieved through this framework—was revealed in the reflective processes following the workshop.

Summary of the Reflections

The reflection from the community group facilitator, conducted in an interview-format, and my personal written reflection revealed the extent to which the goals of each organization were fulfilled, the collaborating organizations' thoughts on the community group members' experiences, their reactions to this project's process of collaboration, and their thoughts on the dialogue processes.

Goals

Lindsay provided a precise description of the goals of the Immigrant Workers Center and the Skills for Change program during the response dialogue process. She stated that the IWC's goal is to "empower individuals through education, specifically with respect to labour issues and workplace rights" (personal interview, June 5, 2007). She stated that the Skills for Change program adopts this goal through utilizing computers and technology:

We are trying to empower people to inform themselves about labour rights and standards in Canada, using the computer...On a practical level, it is to help them use computers in a way that could be valuable in helping them find a job.

(personal interview, June 5, 2007)

Lindsay noted that the use of the digital cameras, and the demonstration of file uploading and email attachments were useful in the effort to fulfill the above mentioned goal—"The fact that they were being taught how to use the cameras and how to upload pictures, that is empowering because it is a useful skill to have" (personal interview, June 5, 2007).

However, Lindsay noted that the development of computer skills for employment is a smaller part of the goal. The larger goal is to “ensure that while they are learning to use the computers, they are also gaining skills to inform themselves—about living in Canada, about being an immigrant in Canada, and being a worker in Canada” (personal interview, June 5, 2007). Lindsay felt that the issues of identity, displacement and culture were relevant to the participants and were important. She stated that it was beneficial for her community group members to “participate in a dialogue about issues that may have been close to them—not exactly the same, but similar in the sense that they are now living in an environment that is foreign to them” (personal interview, June 5, 2007). However, Lindsay felt that the topics could have been more closely related to labour issues in order to fulfill the primary goal of the organization and its program:

... I think the only way that we could have done that is if you had an art exhibit that had to do with labour issues or immigration. And, you almost did. The subject of international adoption was fairly close, but if you really wanted to improve it, it would be great to have an exhibit with someone focusing on activist issues, labour issues or rights. (Personal Interview, June 5, 2007)

Lindsay agreed that this could have also been achieved by catering the discussion more closely to issues relating to labour rights and activism.

After I had mentioned that there was great diversity amongst the participants, the staff and the artists, Lindsay pointed out that this is another goal for the IWC:

That is another part of the Immigrant Workers Centre—to help build a community. To have individuals who didn’t know each other come and see each other’s situations and see how similar their experiences really are. It helps them

to—well, this is my opinion—to feel a little less isolated, a little less unique, but in a good way. Less unique in the sense that the problems that they are facing seem to be bigger problems that are affecting a lot of people, not just themselves. (personal interview, June 5, 2007)

My personal reflection on the project revealed that La Centrale's goal to "create dialogue amongst new visitors from local community groups through connecting information about the gallery and the current exhibit to their personal experiences" was successfully accomplished (written reflection, May 21, 2007). The community group participated in a dialogue about art in a way that connected to their past experiences, which was made possible through the collaboration with the community group facilitator. This fulfilled our goal to "expose new visitors to contemporary art and the artist-run centre" (written reflection, May 21, 2007). La Centrale believed that through achieving a dialogue of this sort, in a welcoming, comfortable atmosphere, the new visitors would be more likely to incorporate contemporary art, galleries and artist-run centers in their futures. However, during my personal reflection I noted we had only partially achieved this: "I feel that the participants will be more aware of galleries, museums and artist-run centres in their daily lives and may feel more comfortable visiting these. However, I am not sure if they would actively visit these places" (written reflection, May 21, 2007). This partial accomplishment of this particular goal was most likely due to a perceived lack of comfort felt by the participants upon arrival, and an inability to develop a deep, connected relationship between the gallery and the participants and between contemporary art and the participants within the short period of time allocated for the collaboration. In my reflection, I stated that:

I feel that more meetings and a longer collaborative process would have helped to engage the community group further, enabling us to have a stronger collaboration. An opportunity for the voices of the participants to be further included would have risen if a longer collaborative process took place, a deeper relationship would have evolved between the participants and the gallery, they would have connected to contemporary art more and would have had a chance to feel more comfortable in the space. (written reflection, May 21, 2007)

Community Group Members' Experiences

When asked if the personal experiences of the participants were drawn upon during the workshop Lindsay emphatically answered “They were!..I think that was done really well—to draw them in” (personal interview, June 5, 2007). She noted that this would have been more successful if there was greater attendance and participation in bringing in an object of personal significance.

Lindsay explained her thoughts about her community group members' levels of comfort during the experience. She felt that the participants felt initially uncomfortable and increasingly felt more comfortable as the experience progressed.

I think that in all honesty, they were uncomfortable—in the beginning though.

When we were sitting around and discussing the exhibit with the artists, I think that they were their most uncomfortable because they felt out of their element. I think that despite our best efforts to make everyone feel equal and part of the discussion, I think they still felt that this was really a foreign environment. They had never been in that neighbourhood in the city before. They had never been in

an art gallery before and they had never met anyone in the room except me before...But, all-in-all, as it went on, I think that everyone felt a lot more comfortable—especially when we brought food into the mix. I think that is always a nice addition because it gets people feeling a little more casual, a little more informal. And, that is when I thought we had our best discussions—sitting outside. And, we kept it on track! We talked about traveling, experiences in Canada, experiences abroad. By the end of it, I think that they felt like they had a really good time. (personal interview, June 5, 2007)

In my personal reflection, I also noted the participants' increase in comfort as the workshop progressed:

The participants really began to feel comfortable during the response period. We were sitting more informally and eating at that point. Also, we had been together for almost an hour, making it easier for the participants to open up during the response. Upon arrival, the participants were very quiet and did appear intimidated. They had just traveled to a new part of the city, entered into a gallery for the first time in their lives and were encountering new people. (written reflection, May 21, 2007)

Due to the positive increase in comfort by the end of the project, Lindsay noted that her community group members would feel less intimidated about entering contemporary art spaces. However, she was uncertain if this experience had impacted the participants in such a way that they would feel compelled to actively search for possibilities where they could participate in events and visit spaces related to contemporary art.

I don't know if I could see them going out on their own to an art gallery. But, if they were to find out about an event at an art gallery, they may be a little less intimidated about going. And just to know that there is such a thing as a non-profit gallery in Montreal, that might keep their interest a little more, but I'm not sure. (personal interview, June 5, 2007)

In Lindsay's opinion, the presence of the artists during the workshop added to the experience in a positive way: "it made it more special to have the people who created the art talked about it. I don't think that a lot of people get that experience, to have the people who created the art explain it themselves. I think that was a nice touch" (personal interview, June 5, 2007).

The Process of Collaboration

In order to frame this section properly, I inquired about Lindsay's and my own definition of collaboration. Lindsay defined collaboration as "essentially two or more groups or individuals that work together for a common goal" (personal interview, June 5, 2007). Based on this definition, I asked Lindsay to share whether or not she felt that this process was a true collaboration. At first, she explained that, in fact, it was not a true collaboration based on her definition.

Because, as I just described it, there would have to be one common goal, but I think we had a few goals. The Immigrant Worker's Centre and Skills for Change program had its own objectives to fulfill the program and La Centrale and you, Natasha, had your own goals as well. To promote collaboration between two

non-profit organizations and to ensure or promote that the participants had a good time in the gallery... So, we had several goals. (personal interview, June 5, 2007)

However, Lindsay then re-worked her definition and determined that this was a collaboration, in her opinion.

But, yes it was collaboration. I'd have to change my definition of collaboration. I think it was collaboration because I think we did work well together and I think that meeting beforehand and the three of us talking, and discussing what would lie ahead, what we could do to make this worthwhile, and now meeting again—to me, that is a good collaborative effort. (personal interview, June 5, 2007)

In my reflection, my definition of collaboration consisted of three components: “an experience where the participants learn together as a community; where there is a common goal; and where there is a more or less equal distribution of power” (written reflection, May 21, 2007). Thus, there are clear connections between our definitions, in that we both feel collaboration deals with two or more people working towards a common goal, and learning together. Also, the point that Lindsay presented regarding multiple goals presents a possibility of a power struggle. Based on my definition of collaboration, I explored whether or not I felt this project was an example of collaboration:

I feel that during the first dialogue, the collaborators were learning about each other, and were developing a relationship. The common goal was to formulate a workshop vision that incorporated the goals and related ideas of each organization. In these senses, I feel that we achieved a collaboration. However, in the final characteristic I deem as essential to collaborations, I feel that there

was less success. In order to save time and to provide direction, Roxanne and I had discussed a project idea prior to the dialogue with Lindsay. Lindsay was very happy with the idea, feeling it encompassed the goals of the IWC and Skills for Change and chose to leave it as is. Therefore, I feel that her contributions to the dialogue were only inadvertently implemented into the project vision rather than enabling her to be an active participant in the creation of the vision. (written reflection, May 21, 2007)

Conversely, when asked about the power distribution among the three collaborators, Lindsay stated that she felt that she had a strong role. She expressed that she felt she was “a representative for the IWC and for Skills for Change.” (personal interview, June 5, 2007). Despite being presented with a project idea, Lindsay felt that the power among the three collaborators was equally distributed: “I think that you had presented this idea to us, but you made us feel that we had pretty much an equal role to play and participate in the process. So, in that sense, I felt that it was even” (personal interview, June 5, 2007).

However, in reference to her role as a representative of her community group, Lindsay felt that she potentially had too much power in the process. She stated: “maybe I had too much power, I don’t know. I was speaking on the behalf of all of the members at Skills for Change, and maybe they didn’t want to go there. Maybe I imposed this trip on them.” (personal interview, June 5, 2007).

The result of this potential power issue surfaced in the apparent initial lack of comfort experienced by the participants and the participants’ disinterest and lack of followthrough in finding and bringing a personally meaningful object or food item to the

event. Lindsay noted that these power and comfort issues could have been remedied through including a session where a representative from La Centrale would visit the Skills for Change program prior to the workshop at the gallery.

I think it would have been a good idea because then they would have met you and felt a little more comfortable going to the art gallery because they would see a familiar face. And, I think they may have felt a little more allegiance to the project. Maybe they would have remembered to bring something from home, or thought it more important to. (personal interview, June 5, 2007)

Likewise, I observed that the addition of this step in the collaborative process as a possible solution to the above mentioned issues.

I feel that if representatives from La Centrale had gone to the IWC prior to the workshop to discuss the exhibit and La Centrale, the participants would have felt more comfortable during the workshop, due to understanding the exhibit, La Centrale, what an artist-run centre is, and how the experience will benefit them. Also, this would provide an opportunity for the participants to get to know a human connected to the gallery, enabling them to see a familiar face when arriving at La Centrale. (written reflection, May 21, 2007)

Dialoguing

Lindsay and I agreed that the initial and reflective dialoguing processes were important components in the project. Lindsay's response to the first dialogue focused on becoming acquainted with the space, the gallery staff, and presenting the IWC to the gallery. She observed that the second dialogue was important to me as a researcher and gallery worker to determine how to improve future outreach community programming.

In reference to the second dialogue, she stated: “I think that this interview is *really* important for someone like you who is going to continue to work with organizations to create dialogue for you to know how to do it better” (personal interview, June 5, 2007). My response centered on the need for the two dialogues to ensure that a positive collaboration ensued.

These were essential to collaborating with the community group in order to create a meaningful experience, to incorporate the community group’s opinions and suggestions in the reflection, and thus to learn from the experience for future programming undertakings. (written reflection, May 19, 2007)

I enquired about the effectiveness and appropriateness of the two dialoguing styles used. Lindsay felt that “both had their merits,” however, she preferred the structured nature of the second dialogue, “in terms of productiveness” (personal interview, June 5, 2007). She explained the value of being provided with the structured questions prior to engaging in the reflective dialogue:

I think that by giving me the questions beforehand it gave me a chance to reflect on what my role was and how the group may have seen the whole process and in doing that I came more prepared, so that we really could come up with new ideas for future collaborations. (personal interview, June 5, 2007)

Lindsay also noted the positive qualities associated with the unstructured quality of the first dialogue:

I think that the first discussion was really well done for what we needed to get accomplished, which was getting to know one another and to establish what our goals were and to take care of the practical details. I think that if that interview

had been too structured it wouldn't have had the same effect. I think that having it casual gave us a chance to be friendly and get to know each other. So, I think you planned it really well having something more informal at the beginning and something more formal at the end. (personal interview, June 5, 2007)

Lindsay felt that the addition of a few structured questions would have helped the first dialogue to remain even more focused, and more productive—that is, a mixed method dialoguing process. She stated that “maybe having a few specific questions would have forced us to think ahead about getting people to the gallery and maybe planning for you and Roxanne to come to the centre; we would have agreed that it was important” (personal interview, June 5, 2007).

My personal reflection demonstrated that I also felt that a mixed method approach would be the most effective means to ensuring a focused, yet malleable dialogue results during future collaborative endeavors between community groups and La Centrale.

I do feel that some structured questions could have assisted in deepening the conversation and enabled a greater amount of collaboration to have evolved. The second dialogue was very focused and rich with information...I believe that a mix of the two dialogue methods would produce a relaxed and fruitful dialogue.

(written reflection, May 21, 2007)

Thus, the two dialogue approaches were seen as pertinent in the collaborative process by both organizations.

The reflective dialogue and written reflection demonstrated that the processes involved in this project were deemed successful by both organizations in creating and

implementing a collaborative vision. Examination of these results and suggestions will be conducted in the following chapter.

CENTRALE EVOLUTION

Chapter 5: Discussion and Implications

This chapter will examine the results of the collaboration, focusing on the strengths and weaknesses discovered throughout the process; will incorporate these results into the Framework for Active Inclusion; and will explore areas for further research.

Examination of the Results of the Collaboration

The success of the project in creating and implementing a collaborative vision for a socially inclusive program will be examined in terms of the following areas as revealed by the results of the reflective processes: 1) Fulfillment of the goals; 2) Effectiveness of the dialoguing processes; and 3) Inclusive nature of the project.

Fulfillment of the Goals

Wenger's (1998) template for collaborative ventures—Communities of Practice—calls for a mutual engagement, shared repertoire and the creation of a joint vision. The initial dialoguing process in this project aimed to successfully implement these three areas. Mutual engagement asks for the collaborators to interact with one another. The collaborators in this project met in order to embark on a mutual engagement at the gallery. The community group facilitator, the gallery programmer and the gallery outreach educator presented their organization's goals and philosophies to mutually engage with one another and determine a shared repertoire—a shared language and understanding. The establishment of the goals and shared repertoire enabled the creation

of a joint enterprise that encompassed the goals and philosophies of each organization. The success of this process was determined through the fulfillment of the goals of each organization via the joint enterprise—the workshop.

The Skills for Change program’s main goal for the project was to provide skills that could empower the participants and increase their chances of finding employment, while providing them with a forum of different perspectives from individuals dealing with similar issues. The community group facilitator felt that this goal was accomplished successfully. However, she noted that the issues dealt with during the project could have been more closely linked to labour issues.

Likewise, the main goals for La Centrale were accomplished during the project. La Centrale’s goal for creating a dialogue with community groups of new visitors, where the new visitors’ past experiences are drawn upon, while being exposed to contemporary art and a contemporary art space was fulfilled. However, La Centrale aimed to achieve this in a non-elitist and inclusive manner, which was deemed as partially fulfilled by both the community group facilitator and La Centrale. This is due to the participants feeling initially uncomfortable and only experiencing apparent feelings of inclusion and comfort as the workshop progressed over the one hour period.

Effectiveness of the Dialoguing Processes

Slotte’s (2004) observation that “dialogue transforms human relationship by overcoming individual and cultural barriers for sharing meaning, values and understanding” (p. 5) indicates the importance of discovering proper methods of dialogue for the development of human relationships. Collaborative projects aim to develop

human relationships. Thus, by determining the success of the dialoguing methods in this project, we can measure the success of the process explored in this project.

Both the IWC and La Centrale deemed the utilization of the Bohmian method for dialoguing during the initial dialoguing stage as a success. This unstructured method was seen as appropriate for a session that was intended to enable the representatives of the two organizations to become acquainted with each other in an unthreatening fashion. The more structured Socratic dialoguing technique was viewed by both organizations as being a successful means to achieving a focused and rich reflective dialogue. It was seen as more appropriate for the second interview because of the lessened need for an unthreatening method, since a positive relationship had developed between the collaborators over the course of the project. However, both organizations felt that a mixed-method approach would produce richer, more focused results, while leaving room for exploration in an unthreatening framework during the initial and response dialogues.

Inclusive Nature of the Project

This project attempted to employ ideas inherent in the Social Inclusion Model in order to foster socially inclusive programming. A main concept for this model is that museums and galleries must be aware and understand “their potential to construct more inclusive, equitable and respectful societies” (Sandell, 2002, p. 4). In order for museums and galleries to contribute to the construction of societies where individuals feel included, respected and equal, they must begin with the more microcosmic level—interactions with their publics. The success of the implementation of social inclusion in this project was determined by the distribution of power between the gallery and their chosen public—the

community group as represented by the community group facilitator—in the decision-making process and in the inclusion, respect and equality experienced by the community group members, as measured by their perceived comfort levels noted by the gallery members and the community group facilitator.

The community group facilitator felt that the power distribution between her and the other two collaborators was equal during the initial dialoguing process. However, she believed there to be a discrepancy in the distribution of power between herself and her community group. She felt that her group should have been offered a greater voice in the project's creation.

My written reflection revealed that I, as a representative for La Centrale, felt that the distribution of power was unequal during the initial dialogue. My perception was that La Centrale presented a project idea to the Immigrant Workers Centre and did not enable the Immigrant Workers Centre to actively contribute to the idea's growth, thus suggesting that the idea was imposed on the group.

Both of the organizations noted an initial discomfort experienced by the participants during the workshop. This was observed to be due to a lack of familiarity with the space, the artists and the employees, and possibly a preliminary feeling of isolation from the ideas presented. It was observed by both La Centrale and the Immigrant Workers Centre that the participants increasingly felt comfortable over the course of the workshop.

Each of the above mentioned areas for determining the success of the project in creating and implementing a collaborative vision for a socially inclusive program were deemed successful in varying levels by both of the collaborating organizations.

Therefore, the project can be referred to as successful in achieving its intended goal. However, there were a number of areas of improvement that were called for during the reflective processes: 1) An increased link between the workshop and the goals of the community group; 2) A heightened balance of power during the planning stage of the project; 3) An increase in the visitors' comfort levels; and 4) The inclusion of a mixed-method dialoguing approach in each dialogue. These areas will be examined in the next section, where suggestions will be made for the improvement of the proposed Framework for Active Inclusion.

Recommended Alterations for the Framework for Active Inclusion

In order to fulfill the above mentioned areas of improvement, I suggest three alterations to be incorporated into the Framework for Active Inclusion: 1) Develop a more ongoing relationship between the museum and the community; 2) Incorporate a pre-workshop session where gallery representatives visit the community group members at the community centre prior to the gallery visit; and 3) Utilize a mixed-method dialogue approach during the planning and reflective dialogues.

Holman Conwill and Marmion Roosa (2003) have noted that collaborative ventures between museums and community groups require time to develop a strong relationship: "Like other types of relationships, museum-community partnerships must be nurtured" (p. 45). They call for an ongoing dialogue to occur between the museum and the community group. The Excellence and Equity report also makes a plea for "ongoing collaborative efforts" (AAM, 1991, p. 19) between museums and their communities. Likewise, Gray and Chadwick (2001) note that "sustained contact between partners is

essential when developing collaborative partnerships” (p. 438). This can be done through incorporating a greater number of planning sessions between the gallery and the community group representative. One essential aspect of the success experienced with the Extreme Beauty partnership program between the Heritage School and the MET was that the collaborators’ “commitment included adequate meeting and planning time to give the project depth and integrity” (Hochtritt et al., 2004, p. 40). With greater time given to the planning stages, power barriers between organizations would have a greater opportunity to be broken down via the development of a stronger, longer-lasting relationship. Due to a greater balance of power, a heightened opportunity for the unfolding of more ways that the goals of the community group and the goals of the gallery could be linked through a workshop would evolve.

By implementing a pre-visit session at the community centre conducted by gallery representatives, the community group can become acquainted with the gallery and be introduced to individuals that would be present at the gallery during the workshop, thus providing familiar faces to the community group during the workshop. Thus, this process would provide a means to creating a relationship between the gallery and the community group participants prior to the visit, theoretically increasing the comfort of the new visitors during the workshop experience. The Herberger College of the Arts Museum notes that a pre-visit lesson helps “foster a comfort level in students for discussing art and for visiting an art museum” (Herberger College of the Arts, 2007). During this session, the community group is introduced to material that will be connected to the gallery visit. Prabhy (1982) notes that pre-visit activities “minimize the disruption often felt by students when their daily routine is altered, they introduce students to the concepts to be

covered in the workshop, and they prepare the students for the museum educator's presence and approach" (p. 34).

This pre-visit session would enable the gallery to become acquainted with the community group through asking the participants about their needs, desires and opinions regarding the project. This would provide an opportunity for the gallery to understand the group from the perspective of the participants and to incorporate their ideas and requirements into the workshop, enabling the power to be distributed more equally. The relationship developed and understanding achieved during a pre-visit session would increase the comfort levels of participants and could thus increase participation, learning and enjoyment during the workshop.

Slotte (2004) asserts that in dialogue interventions, both the Bohmian and Socratic methods are important. Thus, both content and process should be looked at. Slotte (2004) suggests that the ratio of the amount of each method to be involved depends on the needs of the human system engaging in the dialogue. He introduces the work of Buber, who views the purpose of dialogue as being the creation of a "meaningful relation between individuals, a meaningful human system" (Slotte, 2004, p. 20). For Buber, dialogue focuses on the human system and not on the individual. Slotte (2004) emphasizes that the needs of each group need to be examined and taken into account when choosing methods of dialogue. He states that "aiding people to find communication and thinking that enhances their particular system is diversifying, and ultimately leaning to whatever particular goal the system wants to reach" (Slotte, 2004, p. 20). The ideas of Bohm, Nelson and Buber all actively work toward effective communication, where the system works in a collaborative manner.

Through examining the opinions of the community group and gallery involved in this project and through valuing Slotte's approach to mixing the philosophies of Bohm, Nelson and Buber, it has become apparent that implementing a dialoguing method that focuses on both content and process as well as structure and flexibility, all catering to the particular human system can assist in an effort to establish a collaborative vision for socially inclusive programming.

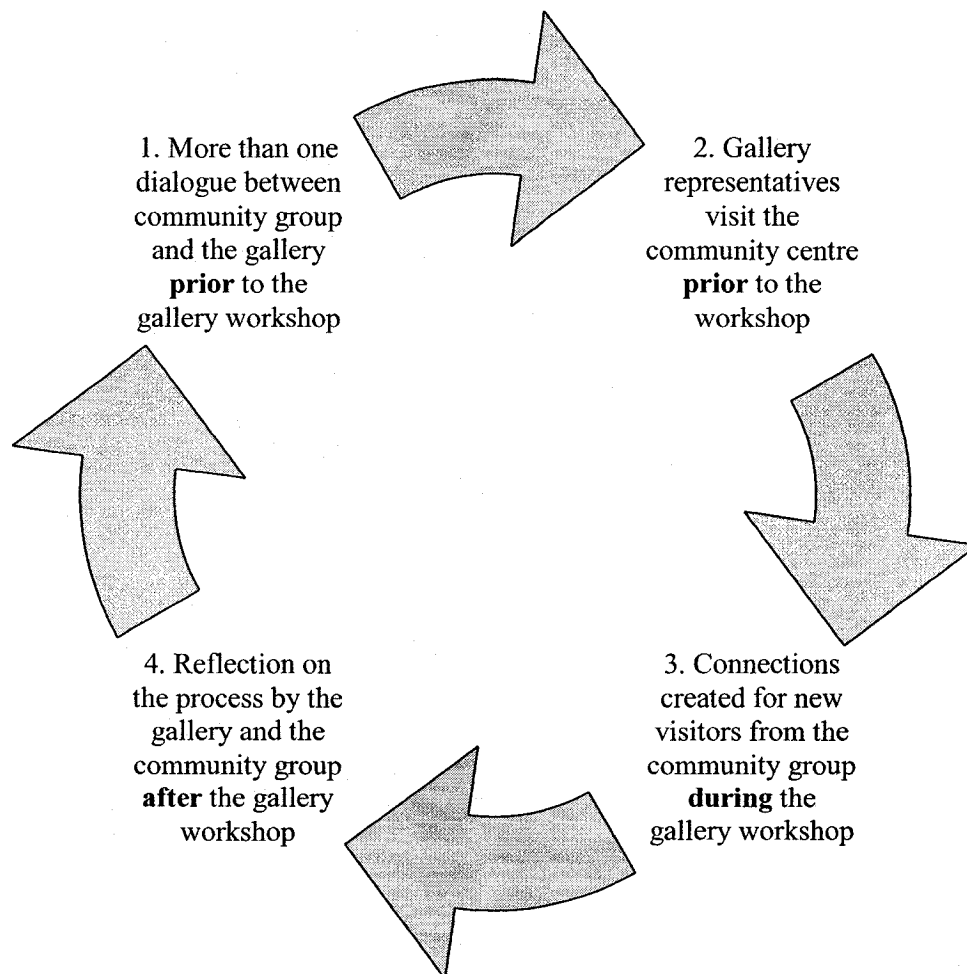


Figure 3. The Revised Framework for Active Inclusion

Therefore, as a result of the findings discovered in this project, the Framework for Active Inclusion has been altered to incorporate these three propositions (fig. 3). The

framework now includes multiple planning sessions with a mixed method dialoguing approach, a pre-visit session conducted by gallery representatives at the community centre, the workshop, a reflective process consisting of a mixed method dialogue between the gallery and the community group representative and a written response by a gallery representative.

Considerations for Further Research

In order to respond to the great changes occurring in galleries and museums, where galleries and museums are becoming “more outward-looking and more aware of their responsibilities to their audiences,” (Hooper-Greenhill, 1991, p. 6) they must develop their policies to respond to these changes. This thesis was conducted in an effort to create a template for effectively creating gallery educational policies that enable the development of collaborative visions for socially inclusive programming, responding to the changes occurring in the museum world. The revised Framework for Active Inclusion provides a promising template for effective policy development for gallery and museum community outreach programming.

This project was a limited collaboration, which could be extended in order to implement, examine and expand upon the suggested areas for improvement as outlined in this research. The most significant discovery in this thesis was the value of developing an on-going, deep relationship between galleries and community groups in gallery outreach programming. The revised Framework for Active Inclusion incorporates this significant finding. To ensure that the revised framework is effective in developing collaborative visions for inclusive programming in gallery-community partnerships, the suggested alterations should be implemented in a project and examined in terms of the

difference in power balance, comfort levels of participants, success of dialoguing processes, and the identification and realization of the goals of both organizations. Research examining this process from the perspective of the community group participants should also be conducted. These procedures should be executed across a variety of gallery-community group collaborations in order to determine the ability of the framework to be used in multiple situations, and to ascertain areas that should be altered in order to improve the process in various circumstances.

Final Thoughts

Through integrating inclusive procedures as outlined in this thesis in museum and gallery policies, museums and galleries can work towards incorporating effective collaborative methodologies, responding to the American Association of Museums' assertion that "museums cannot operate in isolation in a world of shifting boundaries" (AAM, 1991, p. 20). The process outlined by the revised Framework for Active Inclusion presented in this thesis provides a promising method for the creation of collaborative visions for socially inclusive outreach programming between art galleries and community groups.

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Appendix A

Consent to Participate in Research

This is to state that I agree to participate in research being conducted by Natasha Reid (514-274-2164, natashasreid@yahoo.ca), for her thesis project at Concordia University.

A. Purpose

I have been informed that the purpose of the research is as follows:

Educational

B. Procedures

Natasha Reid will interview me for approximately two-three hours in total and will audio record the process. I will participate in two meetings, which will consist of a total of 3 participants, will each be between one and two hours and will be audio recorded. My participation in a workshop will be observed by Natasha Reid. Natasha Reid will take field notes throughout the process. All of this research will be conducted at La Centrale, Galerie Powerhouse (4296 Blvd. St. Laurent, Montreal, Quebec).

C. Conditions of Participation

- I understand that I am free to withdraw my consent and discontinue my participation at anytime without negative consequences.
- I understand that my participation in this study is NON-CONFIDENTIAL (i.e. my identity will be revealed in the study results).
- I understand that the data from this study may be published.
- I understand the purpose of this study and know that there is no hidden motive of which I have not been informed.

I HAVE CAREFULLY STUDIED THE ABOVE AND UNDERSTAND THIS AGREEMENT. I FREELY CONSENT AND VOLUNTARILY AGREE TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY.

NAME (please print) _____

SIGNATURE _____

If at any time you have questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact Adela Reid, Compliance Officer, Concordia University, at 514.848.2424, x.7481 or by email at Adela.Reid@Concordia.ca.