**CSU 1**

**MODULE 5: PLACES OF LEARNING and SITES OF KNOWLEDGE**

Module profile:

Places of learning and sites of knowledge: Thinking about teaching and learning beyond the classroom

Code: EMA441/M5

Subject relationship: Fifth of seven modules

Learning outcomes: At the completion of this module you should have a:

* Understanding of places of learning that exist beyond the school classroom, with a particular focus on museums
* Understanding of how places of learning can be used to enhance and develop teaching and learning in visual arts education in schools

Topics covered:

1. The concept of place

2. Museums as places of learning

3. Relationships between museums and schools

4. Linking museums with Visual Arts curriculum and pedagogy

5. Examples of practice

Resources: Module notes and readings

Assessment: Your understanding of this module will be assessed by assessment three, details of which are in the subject outline.

**Introduction**

As a Visual Arts teacher, you will spend a lot of time in your classroom teaching your subject. The first four modules in this subject have focused on this context and have provided foundational knowledge that will inform your classroom practice. In examining curriculum we have particularly looked at how visual arts explores connections between students and their world in terms of subject matter and the artworld.

 In this module we take this relationship to the world on a slightly different journey. We will be exploring how teaching and learning in classrooms is broadly related to educational opportunities beyond the classroom. As we do this we will take a place-based approach, in recognising that place matters.

Through this module we will examine museums as places of learning that exist within communities. Our focus will particularly be on places that exhibit art and therefore provide opportunities to engage with the visual arts. However, it also needs to be acknowledged that places of learning can more broadly encompass all kinds of museums, memorials, significant cultural sites, architecture, cultural events and so on. We will also consider places that we can physically visit as well as places that can only be visited virtually through an on-line world.

As we examine the nature of learning places we will consider their relationship to schools and to classroom learning, and think about how they can be used, not just as enrichment, but in ways that genuinely link to curriculum content and community. In addition, we will consider the issues surrounding pedagogy in relation to public places of learning.

**Topic 1: The concept of place**

The teaching and learning that takes place in schools and classrooms is well documented. But, places of learning exist beyond the classroom. This is attested to by the various excursions that schools participate in that take them beyond the classroom. It is also evident in the informal learning opportunities that exist beyond schools and are open to all segments of the community. Such opportunities include libraries, short courses, museums, memorials and so on. Often these opportunities are thought about in terms of the subject matter they focus on, or the particular experience they provide. However, any consideration of places of learning needs to acknowledge the importance of place. Place matters. It matters to learners who are experiencing that particular place and it matters to educators who adapt their approach to the particular place.

Many places of learning outside of schools, are clearly linked with community, and enhance appreciation of the wider world, helping build stronger ties and developing capacities to be active citizens. Places of learning importantly link us to our worlds and the spaces we live in.

In citing David Gruenewald, Margaret Somerville has noted that “*Place is therefore profoundly pedagogical: 'as centers of experience’. Places teach us about how the world works, and how our lives fit into the spaces we occupy. Further, places make us. As occupants of particular places with particular attributes, our identity and our possibilities are shaped”* (Gruenwald, 2003b, p. 621). (Somerville, 2007, p. 151).

**STUDY TASK 1:**

**Read the article by Somerville. How do you respond to Somerville’s ideas about place-based education?**

**READ:**

Somerville, M. (2007).Place literacies. [online*]. Australian Journal of Language and Literacy*; v.30 n.2 p.149-164.

<http://search.informit.com.au.ezproxy.csu.edu.au/fullText;dn=160721;res=AEIPT>

**Topic 2: Museums as places of learning**

Often when we think of places of learning beyond the school, we think about museums. But what are museums? According to the ICOM Statutes, adopted during the 21st General Conference in Vienna, Austria, in 2007:

*A museum is a non-profit, permanent institution in the service of society and its development, open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits the tangible and intangible heritage of humanity and its environment for the purposes of education, study and enjoyment.*

It is important to note that this definition clearly places education at the core of the roles and responsibilities of all museums in the twenty first century. As Spock has said “*few public museums would challenge the fundamental idea that museums are educational institutions*” (2006, p.167).

Art museums are museums that specifically focus on the visual arts. The term ‘art museum’ is commonly used in the US and its use is now permeating other parts of the world. In Australia the term ‘art gallery’ is also used. For the purposes of this module, you should consider art museums and art galleries as the same thing.

### STUDY TASK 2

### a)What museums have you visited?

### b) What is your earliest memory of visiting a museum?

### c)What has been the most memorable museum that you have visited and what has made it so memorable?

### The history of museums

### The history of museums is characterized by changing conceptions of their public roles and relationships to audiences. Despite earlier manifestations as ‘cabinets of curiosities’, public museums are widely acknowledged to have originated in the eighteenth century (Duncan, 1995; Hein, 1998; Horne, 1984; Mainardi, 1988; Newsom and Silver, 1978; Roberts, 1997; Shapiro, 1990). These origins have been associated with the grand political shifts of the Age of Enlightenment and the Age of Revolution, which caused previously private collections, to be collected, arranged and classified for the enlightenment of citizens (Mainardi, 1988). Evidence suggests that initially museums took on an authoritative social role aiming to provide instruction that would elevate the taste and civic behaviour of the public, particularly those of the working classes (Belcher, 1991; Mainardi, 1988; McCarthy, 1990).

### In the nineteenth century museums increased their appeal to wider audiences (Belcher, 1991; Shapiro, 1990). A new public service ideology aimed at making museums more accessible was complemented by wider social changes including an increase in the number of public museums, improvements in schooling, the increased availability of printed books and other educational developments (Belcher, 1991). However, this increasing accessibility changed in the early years of the twentieth century. Preoccupation with collections, a downgrading of education and display functions, and two world wars led to decreases in audiences and general neglect (Belcher, 1991; Hooper-Greenhill, 1991; Shapiro, 1990). Museums again became the preserve of the upper middle class, with focus being on established clientele rather than new audiences (Shapiro, 1990). This situation altered once again in the decades between the 1950s and 1980s, when U.S. museums in particular, were noted as making active efforts to develop their audiences through increased public programs and the introduction of blockbuster exhibitions. However, while visitor statistics indicate that museum visiting became a mass activity during the latter part of the twentieth century, individuals of above average affluence and education continued to be disproportionately represented (Bennett, 1994; Bennett and Frow, 1991; Bourdieu and Darbel, 1991; Dimaggio and Useem, 1978; Hooper-Greenhill, 1988; McCarthy, 1990; Merriman, 1991; Shapiro, 1990; Spring, 1992). This is a continuing concern for museums worldwide.

During the past thirty years, museums throughout the world have been exploring the possibilities for change. The proclamation of a “new museology” (Vergo, 1989) highlighted the desire for a redefinition of museum practices and renewed interest in the potential of museums as a positive social force and integral part of society (Macdonald and Alsford, 1996; Roberts, 1997; Saines and Roberts, 1990). Such change was prompted internally and externally, as museums were challenged to provide more relevant cultural programming and to be more responsive to social diversity and changing needs (Hooper-Greenhill, 1996; Worts, 1996). Tyler (2010) talks of explicit attempts to find new audiences through the use of globalised technologies, specialised educational roles, and involvement in formal processes of educational reform. Spock (2006) also observes the ascendency of the museum educator as the mediator of such reforms. All of these efforts have placed visitors and communication as the central focus of the work of museums.

The literature addressing the historical development of museums referred to thus far, largely focuses on museums in the USA and Great Britain. Despite museums commencing in Australia’s colonial period, making them amongst the first public institutions of this kind, the research record for Australia is relatively thin. However, Des Griffin and Leon Paroissien have recently addressed this gap in their publication ‘Australian museums and museology’, which can be accessed on-line.

**READ** a general history of Australian museums:

<http://nma.gov.au/research/understanding-museums/DGriffin_LParoissien_2011a.html>

**READ** a personal account of Australian art museums:

<http://nma.gov.au/research/understanding-museums/DThomas_2011.html>

*Issues of accessibility*

Who visits museums?

Levels of engagement in the arts is reportedly high, with the Australia Council’s report “More than Bums on Seats” (2010) indicating that 9 out of 10 Australians had either creatively or receptively participated in the arts in the year 2009-2010.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics provides comprehensive data about attendance at arts activities in Australia. The full report from 2009-2010 can be found here:

[http://www.ausstats.abs.gov.au/ausstats/subscriber.nsf/0/527DC2F6CB079837CA2577FF0011EC88/$File/41140\_2009-10.pdf](http://www.ausstats.abs.gov.au/ausstats/subscriber.nsf/0/527DC2F6CB079837CA2577FF0011EC88/%24File/41140_2009-10.pdf)

The 2009-2010 ABS statistics make a distinction between museums and art galleries. Art galleries had a reported attendance rate of 26% of the population, while museums had a reported attendance rate of 23% in the previous 12 months. In both cases, attendance was lower in non-metropolitan areas. Art galleries appear to be more successful than museums in attracting repeated visitation.

If you look at increases over time, art gallery and museum visitation has increased between 1999-2010. In the case of art galleries the increase is from 21.2%-25.9%, and in the case of museums, from 19.9% to 25.5%.

ABS data indicates that during the period 2009-2010, attendance at museums and art galleries was noted to be influenced by income and educational attainment. Higher attendance rates correlated with higher incomes and higher educational attainment. Visitors to art galleries generally have higher levels of income and educational attainment than museum visitors.

Despite these positive numbers, it is clear that while public museums may be available to everyone, not everyone is able to access them for a variety of reasons. This might be due to location, or due to a lack of understanding or even a lack of experience in museums. A substantial body of research exists that identifies factors that impede access to museums.

Substantial information also exists to provide guidance for museums in attracting segments of the population that can currently be defined as occasional visitors or non- visitors. Research suggests that to cater for a range of individuals museums should:

* acknowledge the social aspects of visiting (Falk and Dierking, 1992; Heumann Gurian, 1991; Hood, 1983)
* encourage active participation and opportunities for interaction (Hood, 1983; Hooper-Greenhill, 1996, 1999 )
* enable people to feel comfortable (Balling and Falk, 1980; Hein, 1998; Olds, 1990)
* address different levels of understanding and provide a range of ways of accessing information (Gardner, 1983; Hooper-Greenhill, 1994b,1996,1999)
* provide entertainment (Hood 1983 )
* provide assistance with the museum ‘code’ (Hood 1983)
* expose the origins of interpretations and include multiple perspectives (Heumann Gurian, 1991; Macdonald and Alsford, 1991; Rice, 1997; Roberts, 1997)
* acknowledge that meaning making is an integral part of the museum enterprise (Griffin 1999a; Hein, 1998; Hudson, 1975; McCarthy 1990; Silverman, 1995; Williams, 1985).

Issues of accessibility are being explicitly addressed by the museum education, or public programs, departments of museums. According to Eilean Hooper-Greenhill, museum education is “*Education provided within the museum setting (and) the process by which relationships are made between collections of the museum and the interest of a wide range of audiences*” (Hooper-Greenhill, 1992).

While museum education has now established itself as an autonomous part of museums, and its role has been legitimated in relation to the definition and role of museums, its position can still be seen as somewhat tenuous and its role in individual institutions is not consistent. Provisions and services vary from museum to museum. Importantly however, education and its importance has also had an impact on other parts of museums, such as curatorial departments and exhibition design.

**STUDY TASK 3:**

**a) Look at the websites for the following museums and examine the education provisions for schools and the community:**

<http://www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/>

<http://nga.gov.au/>

<http://www.tate.org.uk/>

<http://www.metmuseum.org/>

<http://www.sutherlandshire.nsw.gov.au/Arts_Entertainment/Hazelhurst/>

<http://www.wpccdubbo.org.au/index.html>

**b) Choose one of these websites and write a summary of its educational provisions. Post your summary on the forum.**

*Educational theory and museums*

In *Learning in the Museum* (1998), Hein analyses educational theories in relation to museum practices. This analysis constitutes one of the most rigorous examination of the theoretical underpinnings of the recent educational practices of museums. Epistemological (theories of knowledge) theories are classified and illustrated on a continuum between the two extremes of realism and idealism, while theories of learning are organized on a continuum with two contrasting positions being the transmission-absorption notion of learning at one end and at the opposite end, a constellation of learning theories based on the belief that people construct knowledge. In synthesizing his interpretation of theories of knowledge and theories of learning, Hein notes that the two continua are independent of each other. Thus, educators can combine different epistemologies with different theories of learning (1998, p. 23). In developing a map of educational theory, Hein juxtaposes the two continua on each other orthogonally to create four domains. Each of these domains describes a particular type of educational theory that takes a position on both epistemology and learning theory. Figure 1 provides the overall map.

 Knowledge exists outside the learner

earner

 All knowledge constructed by learner personally or socially

 Learning theory

 Learning Theory

Discovery

 Stimulus- Response

 Response

 Didactic-Expository

Incremental learning

Theory of Knowledge

Constructivism

Learner

constructs knowledge

*Figure 1.* The theoretical underpinnings of education in museums (Hein, 1998, p.25)

One domain is defined as didactic, expository education. Hein associates this educational theory with schooling. Lessons are based on the structure of the subject and taught in a rational sequence. Museums using this approach will have exhibitions that are sequential and will include didactic components, such as labels and panels that describe what is to be learned. Exhibitions will be arranged hierarchically in terms of subject from simple to complex, will include school programs following a traditional curriculum and will determine learning outcomes by the content to be learned. Didactic exhibitions also make some claim that the story they are presenting is “true”. The pedagogy for didactic, expository education focuses exclusively on the subject. Epistemology guides analysis of the essential structure of the subject and learning theory guides the development of individual units that can most easily be learned (1998, pp. 26-37).

Another domain represents educational theories based on stimulus-response. This is similar to the didactic, expository approach but makes no claim for the objective truth of what is learned. Influenced by early behaviourist theory, museums organized on stimulus- response lines are characterized by the use of didactic components and exhibits that are sequential. In addition, Hein states that such museums would repeatedly impress the stimulus on the learner and reward appropriate responses. The pedagogy for stimulus-response education focuses on method. This pedagogy is viewed as common in school, where short term learning goals and highly sequential learning programs are common (1998, pp. 29-38).

Discovery learning represents a dramatically different domain. It approaches learning as an active process and acknowledges that learners undergo changes as they interact with the material to be learned, with their capacity to learn, expanding. Museums organized on discovery learning lines will have exhibitions that allow exploration, allow a wide range of active learning modes, have didactic components that ask questions and prompt visitors to find out for themselves and provide some means for visitors to access their own interpretation. Programs will engage students in activities designed to lead them to accepted conclusions. Discovery learning requires an active learning situation in which learners have the opportunity to manipulate, explore and experiment. The epistemological challenge is identified as the provision of sufficient openness to allow for discovery and sufficient structure to allow desired conclusions to be met (1998, p. 38).

The fourth domain describes constructivism. According to Hein, constructivist learning situations require two separate components: (a) a recognition that learning is dependent upon the active participation of the learner; and (b) a recognition that the conclusions reached are not validated by whether or not they conform to some external standard of truth, but whether they ‘make sense’ within the constructed reality of the learner. A constructivist exhibition will provide opportunities for visitors to construct knowledge and will provide some way of validating visitor’s conclusions and different ways of interpreting objects and ideas. It will have many entry points, no specific path and no end, will provide a wide range of learning modes, will present a range of points of view and will enable visitors to connect with objects (and ideas) through a range of activities and experiences that utilize their life experiences. This is viewed as being in sharp contrast to a traditional view of museum exhibitions. The pedagogic challenge of constructivism is to find experiences that stimulate and challenge, and to design environments that allow the learner to make connections that are not necessarily linear.

As museums have grappled with their educational role and sought ways to apply educational theory,there has been much discussion of ways of thinking about the basis of knowledge in the museum setting. Recognition of the role of context in shaping understanding has led to language about “knowledge” shifting to language about “meaning” and has resulted in the acknowledgment that there are multiple ways of knowing (Roberts, 1997). This constitutes a critical shift that reveals and embraces the storied nature of thought and communication and recognizes the embodied meanings museum exhibits have for visitors (Umiker-Sebeok, 1994). Museums have been viewed as communicating messages that are themselves narratives to be read and understood by visitors (Hein, 1998), while the establishment of dialogue between museums and public has been seen to require the incorporation of viewers narratives (Garoian, 2001). A number of researchers have embraced these notions and present views on learning in museum settings that incorporate a narrative approach (Bourdon Caston, 1989; Davis and Gardner, 1993; Hein, 1998; McCarthy, 1990; Roberts, 1997; Silverman, 1995; Vallance, 2004). This body of literature argues that narrative has a significant role to play in the study of learning in museums and in the facilitation of learning in museums.

Constructivism has been particularly influential in recent years. In defining constructivism, Hein states: “*The term refers to the idea that learners construct knowledge for themselves – each learner individually (and socially) constructs meaning – as he or she learns. Constructing meaning is learning: there is no other kind*” (Hein, 1992, p. 89).

*The future of museum education*

Meszaros (2006) considers the notions of accessibility from a critical standpoint. Along with others (Bourdieu 1968; Bennett 1995; Mathewson Mitchell 2006), she notes that art museums welcome those who are already familiar with visiting museums and those who are familiar with the discourses that surround art. While efforts are being made to welcome other members of the public, these can be seen as “gestures of welcome”, producing some successes. Meszaros also argues that they have a double impact, also operating to exclude and minimise the impact of museums.

I would argue that the museum of the future needs to find balance and that balance should be sought by thinking about museums as distinctive places learning, where meaning making is a negotiation between the learner, the context and the content being presented. This involves the provision of interpretation and the provision of repertoires of meaning making. One of the most important roles of museums is to be aware of the kinds of meaning making repertoires it makes available and to make them both visible and available to the public (Meszaros 2006; Mathewson Mitchell, 2006). Fundamentally to get to this point requires some consideration of the very concept of learning, which seems to be understood in a variety of different ways. It further requires museums to expand their framework of thinking about understanding, in part to dislodge habits of thinking and knowledge hierarchies that have haunted art museums.

**READ:**

Meszaros, C. (2008). Modeling ethical thinking: Toward new interpretive practices in the art museum. *Curator*, 51(2),157-170.

http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com.ezproxy.csu.edu.au/doi/10.1111/j.2151-6952.2008.tb00302.x/pdf

Spock, D. (2006). The puzzle of museum educational practice: A comment on Rounds and Falk. *Curator,* 49(2), 167-180.

http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com.ezproxy.csu.edu.au/doi/10.1111/j.2151-6952.2006.tb00210.x/pdf

**STUDY TASK 4:**

**Read Meszaros (2008). Do you agree with Meszaros view of museums and interpretation? Why or why not?**

**Topic 3: Relationships between museums and schools**

Relationships between museums and schools are generally viewed as educationally and socially valuable (Anderson, 1997; Bennett, 1994; Fredette, 1982; Gardner, 1990; Hooper-Greenhill, 1991; Mitchell, 1996; Moffat, 1989; Newsom and Silver, 1978; Stone, 1992, 1993; Zeller, 1987). Engagements with school-based education have particular significance in terms of the development of future audiences (Adams, 1980; Anderson, 1997; MacDonald and Alsford, 1996). For school-based education, museums provide important learning opportunities that potentially bridge the gap between the classroom and the world beyond, enabling education to fulfil its aim of preparing students for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life. Studies that illustrate the social basis of museum visiting recognize the acquired nature of the capacities required to take advantage of cultural provisions and acknowledge the importance of school-based education in laying the foundation for the development of these capacities. In communicating cultural codes, providing exposure to the arts and providing competences and strategies to decipher museum experiences, school-based education has an important enabling role in providing an orientation to museums. In relation to art museums, Pierre Bourdieu identified the potential role schooling has in “…*mass- producing competent individuals endowed with the schemes of perception, thought and expression which are the condition for the appropriation of cultural goods*…” (Bourdieu and Darbel, 1991, p. 67). He further stated that schooling “…*could compensate (partially at least) for the initial disadvantage of those who do not receive in their family environment any encouragement of cultural practice or of the development of familiarity with works of art*.*”*(Bourdieu and Darbel, 1991, p. 67).

The importance of the role that school-based education has in addressing issues of access to museums, has been implicitly acknowledged in educational reforms in Australia that emphasize the provision of skills, knowledge and attitudes to enable autonomous participation in cultural practice beyond the school years (NSW Board of Studies 1999; 2003). In art education these reforms have involved a move away from a dominant studio focus and a reconceptualization of engagement with the visual arts to emphasize the importance of skilled and knowledgeable viewing.

However, while both the art museum and art education fields recognize the potential contribution of schooling to participation in art museums, there is a tension between the two fields and a lack of enabling resources. Despite a commonality of educational orientation and obvious potential learning relationship, studies indicate that school-based education has experienced difficulties in exploiting the distinctive learning environment and opportunities provided by museums in optimal ways (Berry, 1998; Eisner and Dobbs, 1986; Griffin,1998, 1999b; Grinder and McCoy, 1985; Hooper-Greenhill, 1991; Mathewson, 1994; Stone, 1992a, 1992b, 1993). The problematic nature of engagement is evident in research that demonstrates that museum utilization by school-based educators is characterized by:

* a minimal investment of effort
* general use that is not specifically tailored to curricular needs
* an inability to integrate museum experiences into classroom learning
* a focus on the acquisition of information rather than the development of processes of learning
* ill-defined educational objectives
* a concentration on enrichment and social interaction
* a passive, ‘consumer like’ stance
* lack of mutuality and an absence of dialogue
* a lack of self-recognition

**Study task 5:**

Why do you think this art teachers have had difficulties in utilising museums in optimal ways?

These characteristics perhaps support the assertion made by Spock (2006, p.168), who has observed that museums are good places to learn IN, but clumsy instruments to teach WITH.

A contributing factor in relationships between art museums and art education is the differing nature of each educational environment. It is important to acknowledge that the museum environment is very different to the classroom or school environment. The same approach to teaching and learning that works in the classroom cannot be seamlessly applied to the museum setting. Some of the differences can be found in the table below:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| MUSEUMS | SCHOOLS |
| Expansive learning environment that require physical movement | Structured and bounded physical learning environment |
| Self-directed movement and attention | Guided movement and attention |
| Open curriculum | Structured curriculum |
| Singular experience | Sequenced curriculum |
| Object –based learning | Text-based learning |
| Involves social interaction with public | Involves social interaction with peers |
| One-off/irregular experience with museum educators | Development of long term relationships with teacher |
| Can be an unknown environment | Occurs in a known environment |
| Novelty | Predictability |

**Topic 6: Linking museums with Visual Arts curriculum and pedagogy**

Visual Arts curriculum in NSW

Meszaros (2006, p.158) talks of the art museum providing a productive site to make art objects available to the public and to make the shifting discourses and interpretive authorities that constitute art available to the public. The potential of art museums as such sites clearly links them with the Visual Arts curriculum and provides important entry points for art teachers.

There are clear links with the NSW Visual Arts education foundational concepts of practice, the conceptual framework and the frames. Art museums represent rich sites for investigating art making practice and practice in art history and art criticism. Art making is represented in the work of artists as exhibited within the space. Art history often documents that work, and art criticism responds to it, with those practices evident in catalogues, essays, reviews and so on. Art museums further provide a site where all of the agencies of the conceptual framework come together in a complex relationship. Artists create artworks that draw on the world in terms of subject matter, influence, possibilities, opportunities, and they are then re-presented in the art museum to a range of audiences.

In approaching art museums, each of the frames can be used as a way of understanding the experience of being an audience, the experience of a range of audiences including art historians and art critics, the artworks as both conceptual and material objects, the work of the artist, and the way in which artworks represent the world and artists engage with the world.

It is very important that any visit or use of art museums is linked specifically to curriculum through consideration of specific outcomes and topics being taught within the curriculum, rather than simply being seen as enrichment, or assumptions being made about the value of any experience. While often art museum experiences are thought about in terms of art history and/or art criticism, they can linked with all forms of practice, and can form the link between those forms of practice. Many art museums offer hands-on activities and art making workshops as well as traditional museum tours. In addition, art teachers can provide meaningful integration by considering the visit to an art museum (whether in person or virtually) as part of a broader unit of work, linking the experience to art making, art history and art criticism.

Visits to art museums can involve physical excursions that require significant planning and time. These are arguably the most valuable way to visit art museums. However, such visits are most meaningful if they are planned as part of sequential, regular museum visiting.

If excursions are not possible, art museums can be accessed virtually using websites. Contact with museum staff can provide particularly meaningful insights into possible uses of virtual sites.

Art museums often provide professional learning opportunities, focused on use of museums or more broadly on the subject of Visual Arts. Many art museums have a newsletter that you can sign up for to keep you informed of opportunities.

Visual Arts pedagogy

Earlier in this module, we explored pervasive assumptions about the role of teachers in museums. The research drawn on makes it very clear that teachers experience some difficulty in translating classroom-based pedagogies to the museum setting. In addition, there is a clear evidence that the difference in setting means that teachers need to develop specific pedagogies for museums. This requires engagement with the notion of museums as particular ‘places’. A place-based approach would suggest teachers need to think about developing pedagogies that fit with that place. For this purpose, I would like to return to Margaret Somerville’s pedagogies of place and the principles she suggests:

* place learning is necessarily embodied and local
* our relationship to place is communicated in stories and other representations
* place learning involves a contact zone of contested place stories.

(2007, p.152)

If these principles are applied to art museums, and we consider the role of teachers in the museum, it would mean the following:

* Teachers need to provide opportunities for students to engage with accessible art museums or other cultural sites
* Teachers need to consider how students physically engage with art museums
* Teachers need to facilitate relationships with museums through opportunities that involve students in integrating the experience into their life story and their knowledge of the world
* Teachers need to facilitate relationships with museums through opportunities that involve them in developing representations of their experiences
* Teachers need to acknowledge, and make visible, the various stories that exist within museum context

If we were then to take on the ideas of Meszaros, these guidelines could be further extended to include:

In making visible the stories that exist within museums, teachers need to provide students with entry points to the repertoires of meaning making that are relevant. This means they need to show students how to interpret what is presented and shared. It further means acknowledging that not all interpretations are equal, or necessarily correct. This approach acknowledges the social basis of museum visiting and the cognitive aspects of learning about art. Bourdieu (1968) noted that a work of art “only exists as such for a person who has the means to appropriate it, or in other words, to decipher it” (Bourdieu, 1968, p. 594). He further states that an encounter with a work of art is not “love at first sight” but presupposes an act of cognition which implies the implementation of a cognitive acquirement. Part of the work of teachers in facilitating such encounters is to provide the cognitive frameworks and understandings, that build from personal experiences.

It is significant that I have been noting the importance of the teacher in this section. While museum educators and public programs officers do provide educational services in art museum settings, they are not available in all institutions, and their services may not necessarily be relevant to the needs of teachers. Furthermore, there is significant evidence to suggest that it is classroom teachers who can make the most difference to the learning of students in art museums. The potential of teachers to direct learning in museums is highlighted in experiments directed by Abigail Housen at the Museum of Modern Art. This study found that teachers with relatively little experience with art could produce significant growth in their students, exceeding that which trained museum educators could produce (Housen and Duke, 1998, p. 96). Realising this potential requires teachers to recognise their responsibilities to plan, direct, guide, integrate and reflect on museum experiences. It further requires a negation of the view that art museums or the artworks within them, can effectively ‘teach’ through a pedagogy of display. Just as place matters, teachers and teaching matters!**Topic 7: Examples of practice**

In this section, I have identified some interesting museums that I would like you to look at in more detail. These museums provide exemplars of practice in museum education and in the development of relationships with schools.

Please access and read the School and Teacher Programs for the Museum of Modern Art, New York.

<http://www.moma.org/docs/learn/School_Teachers_Programs_Brochure.pdf>

Also have a look at their online resources:

<http://www.moma.org/learn/teachers/online>

Look at the new Museum of Contemporary Art, Australia, resources for secondary schools:

<http://www.mca.com.au/learn/schools/>

Have a particular look at their new digital excursions, which attempt to address the issue of physical access:

<http://www.mca.com.au/learn/schools/digital-excursions/>

**References:**

Meszaros, C. (2008). Modeling ethical thinking: Toward new interpretive practices in the art museum. *Curator*, 51(2),157-170.

http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com.ezproxy.csu.edu.au/doi/10.1111/j.2151-6952.2008.tb00302.x/pdf

Spock, D. (2006). The puzzle of museum educational practice: A comment on Rounds and Falk. *Curator,* 49(2), 167-180.

http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com.ezproxy.csu.edu.au/doi/10.1111/j.2151-6952.2006.tb00210.x/pdf