32nd Annual Visitor Studies Association Conference

Ways Of Knowing

July 10 - 13, 2019
Detroit, Michigan
Dear Attendees:

Welcome to Detroit for the 32nd Annual Conference of the Visitor Studies Association! We’re excited to offer over 50 sessions and workshops that will provide opportunities to discuss new findings, discover new methods, and explore how social and technological shifts may affect the nature of our work.

Ways Of Knowing

How do we know what we know? The story of visitor studies is long and somewhat winding – and it continues to grow and evolve. Over the years, visitor studies professionals have built a breadth and depth of knowledge around visitors and their experiences, and although our work is generally grounded in the social sciences, we have sought to find meaning in a variety of ways and through a wide range of approaches. From research to evaluation, to facilitation and everything in between, we are tasked with answering questions that are sometimes big and sometimes small. These questions may inform specific institutional strategies, and they may also inspire and inform our field and beyond. But how do we know what questions to explore, or what questions are worth exploring? Who is responsible for exploring these questions?

Our Host City

Welcome to the Motor City! Detroit is home to a number of museums, unique outdoor art installations, a newly revitalized riverfront, and Belle Isle, a protected state park in the middle of the Detroit River. Just north of the hotel, you can find the Detroit Historical Museum, the Museum of Contemporary Art, and the world-famous Detroit Institute of Arts, featuring iconic murals by Diego Rivera. Or head south to walk along the river and visit John K. King Used & Rare Books, a bookstore with one million books housed in a former glove factory. Along with hearing inspiring conference talks and taking in the wide variety of culture, we recommend grabbing a slice of Detroit-style pizza (square and thick cut), some authentic soul food, or heading to Eastern Market to grab some local produce and check out some historic Detroit architecture.

In addition to this year’s evening event at the Charles Wright Museum of African American History, we hope you will consider participating in a Dining Discussion or joining a FIG. Consult this program or the registration table for information about these opportunities.

We hope you learn, interact with others, enjoy Detroit, and leave inspired. We also invite you to share your thoughts and suggestions with us, as we have already started planning for the 2020 conference.

With warmest regards,

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Session Streams:

**Practical Tips:** Information about carrying out visitor studies that is particularly relevant for those new to the field but also useful for veterans.

**Methods and Methodologies:** Strategies & concepts related to data collection, analysis, & reporting.

**Reporting Findings:** Presenting the findings from a discrete research or evaluation project.

**Big Questions and Field-wide Issues:** Wrestles with a big question in the field and/or poses a problem or question for a group to discuss/solve. This could be work continued from a previous convening.

**Culturally Responsive Evaluation:** Focused on the ways visitor studies help us better understand and implement inclusive practices that can foster diversity and improve accessibility at our institutions and in our field.

**Networks and Partnerships:** Exploring the opportunities and challenges presented by projects that bring together multiple institutions or communities to create informal learning networks; role of partnerships.

**Organizational Change and Capacity Building:** Findings, reflections, and best practices related to leading institutional change through research and evaluation and building evaluation capacity for ourselves and our stakeholders.

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Research & Evaluation

Center for Innovation in
Informal STEM Learning at Arizona State University
2019 April Award Winner, Marsela Rojas-Salas
Junior Research and Evaluation Associate, Oregon Museum of Science and Industry

The Visitor Studies Association has awarded Marsela Rojas-Salas as its 2019 April Award Winner. As an aspiring professional in the museum field, Marsela looks forward to attending this year’s conference to engage with and learn from other museum professionals across the nation. She is particularly interested in learning about the ways in which museum professionals from diverse backgrounds are transforming the field of visitor studies to become more thoughtful, equitable, and social justice oriented. She is also interested in learning how other evaluators and researchers collaborate with exhibit developers and designers and educators to develop instruments and analyze data that is supportive of their design process. Look for and help us welcome Marsela Rojas-Salas at the Conference in July!

2019 Student Scholarship Winners

Erin Cote, University of Washington

Erin Cote, who is in the University of Washington’s Museology program with a focus in evaluation, was selected as a 2019 VSA Conference Scholarship Winner. Erin is interested in learning more about various methodologies in visitor studies. She believes this conference will provide her with an opportunity to expand her methodological knowledge which will be extremely useful as she pursues a career in museum evaluation.

Celeste Moreno, University of Colorado - Boulder

Celeste Moreno was selected as a Scholarship Recipient for the 2019 VSA Conference. Her professional goals are all related to her desire to spark joyful learning and curiosity about the world through the creating of immersive learning experiences. She believes this year’s conference will enable her to better understand the communities our work is serving and the relationship between our work and our audiences. She is excited to attend the conference and believes that it will help her to gain more knowledge about the field, to better position her to work in this field after graduation, and to nuance her current understandings of the field.

Stephanie Morrison, University of Washington - Seattle

For the 2019 VSA Conference, Stephanie Morrison was selected as a scholarship recipient. She believes that VSA will push her understanding of what museum evaluation can mean. The opportunity to attend VSA’s conference will help her widen her conception of the visitor’s studies field and will position her to meet professionals whose interests and practice also deeply align with her own.
Tuesday, July 9, 2019
4:30 pm – 6:30 pm Registration Open - Venetian Ballroom Foyer

Wednesday, July 10, 2019
8:00 am – 4:00 pm Registration Open - Venetian Ballroom Foyer
8:30 am – 4:30 pm VSA Board of Directors Meeting
9:00 am – 4:00 pm Pre-Conference Workshops
5:00 pm – 7:00 pm Welcome Happy Hour - Boulevard A

Thursday, July 11, 2019
8:00 am – 4:00 pm Registration Open - Venetian Ballroom Foyer
8:00 am - 5:00 pm Silent Auction - Venetian Ballroom
8:00 am – 9:00 am Breakfast - Venetian Ballroom
9:00 am – 10:30 am Opening Plenary & Keynote, Dr. Katrina Bledsoe - Venetian Ballroom
10:30 am - 10:45 am Coffee Break
10:45 am – 12:00 pm Concurrent Sessions I
12:45 pm – 1:30 pm FIG Lunches
1:45 pm – 3:00 pm Concurrent Sessions II
3:00 pm – 3:30 pm Afternoon Refreshment Break
3:15 pm – 5:00 pm Poster Sessions - Venetian Ballroom
6:00 pm – 9:00 pm Signature Event at the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History (bus departures begin at 5:45pm)

Friday, July 12, 2019
8:30 am – 4:00 pm Registration Open - Venetian Ballroom Foyer
8:45 am - 3:15 pm Silent Auction - Venetian Ballroom
8:45 am - 9:15 am Breakfast - Venetian Ballroom
9:15 am – 10:30 am VSA Membership Meeting and Awards Ceremony
10:30 am – 10:45 am Coffee Break
10:45 am – 12:00 pm Concurrent Sessions I
12:30 pm – 1:30 pm VSA Committee Meetings
1:45 pm – 3:00 pm Concurrent Sessions II
3:00 pm – 3:30 pm Afternoon Refreshment Break
3:30 pm – 4:45 pm Concurrent Sessions III
6:00 pm Dining Discussions

Saturday, July 13, 2019
8:00 am – 9:30 am Closing Plenary & Breakfast, Dr. Porchia Moore - Venetian Ballroom
9:45 am – 11:00 am Concurrent Sessions I
11:15 am – 12:30 pm Concurrent Sessions II
Pre-conference Workshops

- **Evaluation can be Fun: Transforming Evaluation Techniques for Busy Museum Practitioners (9:00am - 4:00pm)**
  - Marianna Adams and Jeanine Ancelet, Audience Focus Inc.
  - Workshop location: Detroit Institute of Art. Participants are responsible for own transportation to location.
  - Learn how traditional evaluation practice can be adapted for the on-the-floor practitioner. Investigate ways to embed visitor evaluation in programs or exhibitions that make data collection more time-efficient for you and a more enjoyable activity for the visitor. Practice concrete techniques at the host-museum and ideas you can take away for your own institution—for yourself and as a tool to help train your coworkers in evaluation. Help create new and innovative methods with other museum practitioners. Most importantly, have fun and inspire yourself at the same time!

- **Developing Rubrics: Authentic Measures of Informal Learning (9:00am - 4:00pm)**
  - Amanda Krantz and Erin Wilcox, Randi Korn & Associates
  - Workshop location: Woodward C
  - In visitor studies, we are often required to provide measurable, reliable findings to demonstrate impact. Yet, measuring learning that takes place in an informal setting is extremely challenging. The impact an exhibition or program can have on one visitor may vary considerably from its impact on another visitor, and these often subtle differences in impact are difficult to measure through conventional means of evaluation. Through large and small group work, workshop participants will learn to develop and use rubrics, which provide an authentic way to measure the impact of informal educational programs and exhibitions while at the same time, abide by rigorous evaluation standards. Participants will leave with a draft of a rubric as well as the skills to continue using rubrics in the future. If possible, participants should bring to the workshop a description of a program or exhibition, including the visitor outcomes.

- **Morning Workshops (9:00am - 12:00pm)**
  - Dabbling in the Data - Hands-On Data Analysis for Teams
    - Justine Wolitzer and Corey Newhouse, Public Profit
    - Workshop location: Woodward D
  - Data can help museums and cultural institutions target services and tell their story, but analysis can be intimidating and frustrating, especially for those with limited formal training in evaluation. In this skill-building session, participants will learn activities that can help teams make meaning out of their data, yielding actionable insights and powerful stories. Session participants will receive a copy of Dabbling in the Data, a facilitators’ guidebook that provides step-by-step instructions for 15 interactive team activities that organizations can use to make meaning of their data. Participants will practice activities and learn how to link the methods to specific learning needs in their organizations.

- **Afternoon Workshops (1:00pm - 4:00pm)**
  - Visualizing Survey Data: Practical Tips and Tricks for Reporting
    - Nick Visscher, Denver Zoo and Chris Cadenhead, Pacific Science Center
    - Workshop location: Woodward D
  - Do you want your survey data to be seen, remembered, and used by staff and stakeholders? Where do you begin? In this workshop participants will learn about basic design principles for effective data visualization using practical examples from common survey question types that many museum researchers and evaluators use (multiple choice, select all that apply, rating scales, open-ended response, etc.). Participants will work together to create some of their own data visualizations using Microsoft Excel and leave with helpful tips, tricks, and templates they can use with their own data for their own organizations. Participants should come with a fully charged laptop, and a basic working knowledge of Microsoft Excel. This workshop is co-sponsored by the Data Viz & Reporting and Zoo & Aquarium Focused Interest Groups.
**THURSDAY**

**OPENING PLENARY & KEYNOTE - Venetian Ballroom - 9:00 am - 10:30 am**

**Dr. Katrina Bledsoe**

Dr. Katrina Bledsoe brings extensive experience as an evaluator of programs at the local, state, and federal government levels. Her expertise is in community-based education and social services program evaluation, mixed methodology and methods, research innovation, applied social psychology, and cultural contexts. Dr. Bledsoe provides technical assistance to grantees under the National Science Foundation (NSF) INCLUDES program, has served as an evaluation scientist for the Suicide Prevention Resource Center; and has lead an evaluative qualitative outcome study focused on technology tools for teachers and students in India. We believe she will serve as an asset to our program because of her experience evaluating programs at various levels; as well as her attention to culturally responsive evaluation. We know she will be able to help VSA attendees address important topics related to equity-focused evaluation in applied settings, and challenge the ways in which our training as evaluators has led us to pursue questions in particular ways.

**SESSION ONE - 10:45 am - 12:00 pm**

**VENETIAN BALLROOM**

Measuring Learning of Complex Topics: Challenges and Successes Explored - Roundtable / Methods & Methodologies

**Speakers:** Zdanna King, Evelyn Ronning

Learning about complex topics like evolution, climate change, or big data can be difficult to measure in informal environments where we have the pressure to avoid upsetting visitors. Bring examples and challenges from your own work for discussion and hear more about measuring evolution learning in the Theatrical Gaming project.

**VENETIAN BALLROOM**

Studying Intangible Dimensions of Learning: Are We ‘Effing’ the Ineffable? - Roundtable / Big Questions & Field-wide Issues

**Speakers:** Sarah May, Becki Kipling, Susan Letourneau

Intangible dimensions of knowledge, like emotion or imagination, have been debated for centuries. Emotion is pitted against rationality. Imagination against reality. However, both arguably impact knowledge construction. This roundtable discussion will unpack these tensions, asking participants to reflect on the current limits of research, evaluation, and design addressing such constructs.

**FOUNDERS A**

Human Health Changes Associated with an Experience at a Zoo - Paper / Reporting Findings

**Speaker:** Amy Niedbalski

We conducted a multi-departmental project in which two hundred Zoo visitors provided physiological (blood pressure and cortisol) and psychological (mood) data, before and after their visit to an immersive, naturalistic exhibit, in order to evaluate health-related responses. The study procedure, results and implications to the field will be discussed.

**FOUNDERS A**

Studying Touch as Way of Knowing in the Art Exhibition - Paper / Reporting Findings

**Speakers:** Dimitra Christidou, PhD, Palmyre Pierroux

This paper presents observation methods and findings from a larger study that investigated how visitors haptic interactions with five original sculptures made in stone enter into their interpretive processes. We will discuss the touch patterns identified through the data analysis and consider their role in visitors’ meaning-making.

**FOUNDERS A**

Ways of Seeing, Ways of Understanding - Paper / Reporting Findings

**Speaker:** Luise Reistatter

The stereotype of seeing art is a viewer in front of a painting. Breaking with this ideal of contemplation, the paper presents findings from the study Belvedere Before and After. By contrasting data from mobile eye tracking and subjective mapping correspondences between ways of seeing and understanding will be shown.
CONFERENCE SESSIONS

SESSION TWO - 1:45 pm - 3:00 pm

ESQUIRE ROOM
Retrospective Pre-Post tests: When and How to Use This Cool Tool - Panel / Methods & Methodologies
Speakers: Melanie Hwalek, PhD, Cassandra Filer
There are visitor studies contexts where Retrospective Pre-Posttest (RPT) methodology is preferred over traditional pre-post testing for measuring program outcomes. Participants will learn about the research on RPT, see examples of RPT design options, and explore ways to analyze RPT data to get the most out of this cool tool.

CRystal Ballroom
Data Collection, Data Management, Data Analysis, Oh My! Training Videos for Evaluation in Informal Learning Environments - Hands-on Workshop / Practical Tips
Speakers: Karen Peterman, Kim Kiesewetter, Jane Robertson Evia
This workshop style session will share a series of short training videos and related resources that were created for practitioners who need a refresher on evaluation practices for themselves, or those who need off-the-shelf resources that can be used to train volunteers and docents in basic evaluation methods.

Founders A
Incorporating Experts' Narratives into STEM Inquiry Programs: Assessing Family Learning - Panel / Methods
Speakers: Sue Allen, Kim Koin, David Uttal, Kimberly Sheridan
Awardees from IMLS'S StemX program will share fresh perspectives on assessing learning in STEM programs in museums and libraries. All projects featured in-depth studies of learning during family programs where local STEM experts provided personal narratives to enrich the inquiry. We will share insights and invite discussion of applications to research, evaluation, and practice.

Founders B
Speakers: Matthew Lasnoski, Pei Koay, Jessimi Jones
One size doesn’t fit all when building cultures of evaluative thinking. This presentation explores case studies about building internal capacity. We share our methods for addressing the evaluative priorities of our very different institutions: the National Museum of the American Indian, the Freer|Sackler, and the Philbrook Museum of Art.

Esquire Room
Ways of Knowing Detroit: Evaluation in the Motor City - Panel / Org. Change & Capacity Building
Speakers: Kate Livingston, Tracey Williams, Diane Miller, Kenneth Morris, Mark Mulder
This talk-show style session features Detroit-area cultural institutions (Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History, Detroit Institute of Arts, and Detroit Zoological Society) sharing and discussing what is happening in local museum evaluation, where evaluation capacity is growing and needed, and considering the future through multiple perspectives and lenses.
**CRYSTAL BALLROOM**

**How Stakeholders’ Conceptions of Research and Evaluation Affect Utilisation** - Roundtable / Big Questions and Field-wide Issues

**Speaker:** Marie Hobson

A major barrier to the effectiveness of visitor studies is an absence of a shared definition of research and evaluation amongst museum practitioners as well as a perception that social science and qualitative work is not rigorous. This session explores these findings and the implications for our sector.

**CRYSTAL BALLROOM**

**“What Do You Do Again?” Framing Evaluation for Museum Staff** - Roundtable / Org. Change & Capacity Building

**Speakers:** Sara Davis, Fran Mast, Sena Dawes

How on Earth do I talk about evaluation? Even if you have expertise in the field, getting staff on board with evaluation can be a communication challenge. In this session three internal evaluators, from three very different organizations, provide their perspective and demonstrate their responses to this question.

**CRYSTAL BALLROOM**

**CT Without the Screen: Measuring Computational Thinking in Informal Education** - Roundtable / Methods & Methodologies

**Speakers:** Megan Goeke, Gretchen Haupt, Rachel Becker-Klein

Formal education trends often serve as harbingers for informal learning. As Computational Thinking (CT) gains momentum in schools, museums will soon need to develop measures and tools to understand CT adapted for free-choice experiences. This roundtable invites examination of CT conceptualization and measurement in informal settings.

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**POSTER SESSION** - Venetian Ballroom - 3:15 pm - 5:00 pm

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**FRIDAY**

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**SESSION THREE - 10:45 am - 12:00 pm**

**FOUNDERS A**

**Evaluation as a Catalyst for Equity** - Panel / CRE

**Speakers:** Cecilia Garibay, Swarupa Anila, Diane Miller, Laura Huerta-Migus

This panel will discuss several projects that take different approaches to honoring and incorporating community voice in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of informal learning programs and exhibitions.

**FOUNDERS B**

**Studying Visitors’ Exhibition Experiences in a Virtual Reality Environment** - Paper / Reporting Findings

**Speakers:** Palmyre Pierroux, Rolf Steier, Anne Qvale

This paper presents the research design and findings from a study of visitors experiences in a full-scale physical, virtual and sound environment that was designed for an exhibition in an architecture museum. The paper contributes to studies of visitors experiential knowledge in virtual reality environments in museums.

**FOUNDERS B**

**Designing and Evaluating Soundscapes in Virtual Reality Exhibitions** - Paper / Reporting Findings

**Speaker:** Jaran Rudi

This paper contributes to visitor studies by presenting research perspectives and methods for understanding sound as a way of knowing in exhibitions. To illustrate how psychoacoustic principles may be applied as evaluation criteria, the paper presents findings from a study of a visitors soundscape experiences in an architecture museum exhibition.

**FOUNDERS B**

**Social Learning in Exhibitions - Mind Your Brain! Exhibition** - Paper / Reporting Findings

**Speakers:** Kati Tysvtr, Heidi Rosenstram, Marilla Kortesalmi, Kari Halme

Mind Your Brain! is an exhibition on the brain and brain health. Cooperation and interaction with others are particularly important for the development of the human brain. The entire exhibition is designed as a series of brain challenges for groups from two to five people. How does the social dimension impact the learning outcomes? To study this, Heureka and Laurea University of Applied Sciences started co-operation, using students to collect data and analysing the data together.
ESQUIRE ROOM
From Private to Public: Understanding Visitors’ Perceptions of Pro-environmental Behaviors - Paper / Reporting
Speakers: Jennifer Rigney, Nadya Bennett, Erin Cote, Maia Werner-Avidon
Using case studies from three conservation-related projects, this session will share recent visitor research focusing on three organizations efforts to understand their audience engagement with a range of environmental action from private, everyday actions to public, collective action.

WOODWARD A
Appreciative Inquiry - A Tool for Community Engagement and Evaluation Strategy for Organizational Change - Paper / CRE
Speakers: Maritza Hernandez-Bravo, Amanda Trosten-Bloom, Rebecca Teasdale
Appreciative Inquiry (AI) surfaces often untold stories of success, igniting hope and accelerating capacity for change by engaging the whole system, often including those on the margins in discovering, dreaming and designing organizations and ways of working that reflect and honor the whole. The session will provide a brief history of AI and how it is applied.

WOODWARD CD
Come Together! Successes and Challenges of Building and Sustaining Networks - Panel / Networks & Partnerships
Speakers: Nicole Reed, Kari Nelson, Claire Thoma Emmons, Nick Visscher, Alexander Lussenhop
Panelists representing a diverse group of learning, research, and evaluation networks will discuss successes and challenges encountered in building and sustaining the networks at various points in their lifetimes. Attendees who have participated in networks are invited to share their experiences with the goal of identifying solutions to shared challenges.

SESSION FOUR - 1:45 pm - 3:00 pm
FOUNDERS A
Comparing Evaluation Methods From Midwest to Middle of the Ocean - Paper / Reporting Findings
Speaker: Erin Tate
Evaluating educational components of a conservation partnership in Saipan has presented both unique opportunities and challenges. Instruments used in local collaborations were modified to be facilitated by educators 7000 miles away with collection complete in 2018. This session will compare success of modified tools and discuss further steps for 2019.

FOUNDERS A
Challenging Front-End Evaluation to Study Challenging Topics - Paper / CRE / Reporting Findings
Speaker: Cat Scharon
This session will focus on two methodologies used to assess prior knowledge, attitudes, and interests of non-Native audiences for the Field Museum’s Native North American Hall renovation. An online survey used perceptions of discrimination for psychographic segmentation, while on-site interviews provided insight into preferred amounts of contemporary versus ancestral content.

FOUNDERS A
Using Museums to Promote Cultural Identity Among Yemeni Students - Paper / Reporting Findings
Speakers: Marion Tate, Dr. Navaz Bhavnagri
The teacher applied a Vygotskian theoretical framework to an art and heritage museum project examining objects supplemented by art, literature, and technology, before, during, and after 4-museum visits to teach Yemeni students, ages 11-14 years, to promote cultural identity. Assessments included observation, documentation, and interviews over 1-school year.
FOUNDERS B
Becoming Renaissance Evaluators: The Expanding Role of Evaluation Beyond Galleries - Panel / Practical Tips
Speakers: Stephen Ashton, PhD, Megan Goeke, Rita Deedrick, Sarah May
While evaluation for content spaces such as exhibits and educational programs are the bread and butter of visitor studies, some evaluators have also been asked to conduct a wide variety of studies about the operational side of museums. Come learn how to make the best of these operational evaluation opportunities.

ESQUIRE ROOM
The Great Outdoors: Visitors Studies and Evaluation in Outdoor Settings - Panel / Practical Tips
Speakers: Kari Ross Nelson, Michelle Mileham, Nicole Rivera
In this learning-circle style session we will explore visitor studies and evaluation in outdoor spaces such as gardens, zoos, arboretums, and more. Presenters will share their experiences, successes and challenges, and then invite attendees to build on those as well as share their knowledge in a setting of open dialogue.

WOODWARD A
Bringing New Techniques and New Staff to Museum Audience Evaluations + From Report to Reality:
Developing Design Principles from Evaluation Results - Hands-on Workshop / Practical Tips / Reporting Findings
Speaker: Ramee Gentry
How has the US Holocaust Memorial Museum used audience evaluation as a catalyst for change, not only to its exhibitions, but also to staff participation in and support of visitors studies? This presentation and activities help participants learn about the approaches used and lessons learned as the Museum prepares for revitalization of its permanent exhibition.

WOODWARD CD
Unplugged and Plugged Computational Thinking for Children: Research and Practice - Hands-on Workshop / Methods & Methodologies
Speakers: Monica Cardella, Hoda Ehsan, Philip Cardella
This session highlights ways to promote computational thinking (CT) in children during informal learning experiences. This session consists of two components: (1) two presentations focusing on what CT is and how to engage children in CT activities, and (2) a hands-on session that features strong CT activities, toys and games.

WOODWARD B
Building Capacity for Cultural Responsiveness in the Visitor Studies field - Working Group / CRE / Org. Change and Capacity Building
Speakers: Jill Stein, Evelyn Christian Ronning
Building off conversations facilitated by the Building Communities FIG at VSA 2018, this working group session will focus on developing an action plan around a few key priorities that emerged around building capacity for culturally responsive evaluation practices that embrace multiple ways of knowing and understanding the visitor experience.

SESSION FIVE - 3:30 pm - 4:45 pm
FOUNDERS A
Cultural Organizations Breaking Barriers: Leveraging Partnerships to Create Informal Learning Opportunities
Speakers: Kathleen Doll, Mollie Parsons
Museum education, community partnerships, and evaluation have the power to disrupt traditional museum visitor-ship by bringing art, culture, and STEAM back into the everyday lives of underserved youth. Through mini lectures, discussions, and break-out activities, speakers offer strategies to create cross-sector partnerships and leverage evaluation to advance community-wide informal education.
APPLICATIONS

FINDERS B

Shared Measures for Evaluating Common Outcomes of Informal Education Experiences - Panel / Methods & Methodologies

Speakers: Amy Grack Nelson, Karen Peterman, Ryan Auster, Alex Lussenhop

There has been a recent increase in the development and use of shared measures to evaluate common outcomes in informal STEM education. The presenters will discuss technical qualities of shared measures, benefits and concerns around their use, and go into detail of three shared measure initiatives.

ESQUIRE ROOM

Measuring and Aligning an Art Museum Distance Learning Program - Paper / Reporting Findings

Speakers: Erin Wilcox

This paper presentation will describe a multi-phase, mixed-methods evaluation of a distance learning program from the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts. The presentation will include obstacles associated with collecting data from minors in a school setting and findings associated with both the formative and summative studies.

ESQUIRE ROOM

They Came to the Garden, But What Did They Learn? - Paper / Reporting Findings

Speakers: Dr. Martha Brown, Diane Robaina

The goal of this presentation is to demonstrate: how botanical gardens and can partner with schools and teachers to provide field experiences for students, how to align program goals with academic standards, and how to use pre-post tests to assess learning and behavioral changes. Additionally, we will discuss our attempt to determine if water conservation education had an impact on students’ own water conservation behaviors.

ESQUIRE ROOM

Integrating Young Museum Educators’ Perspectives in Studying Visitor Experiences - Paper / Practical Tips

Speakers: ChangChia, James Liu, Katherine Culp, Priya Mohabir

The study directly addresses the need of honoring and investigating stakeholders’ perspectives in conducting visitor studies, and challenges the boundaries between museum educators and evaluators. The study also highlights the opportunity in career development for young museum professionals in STEM fields.

WOODWARD A

Writing on the Wall: Centering Interpretation Around Visitor Access - Hands-on Workshop / Practical Tips

Speakers: Sara Davis, Jennifer Borland

For many visitors, labels are the primary access point to interpret art, but is this technique visitor-centered? This session will share the results of two projects which questioned the purpose a label serves, what it communicates to visitors, and how to tailor this content to a wide audience.

WOODWARD CD

Adventures in Teen Evaluation - Hands-on Workshop

Speakers: Lauren Holley, Lauren Smedley

This session offers a starting point to learn more about working with teens for those hesitant to jump in or curious about what is possible on the teen evaluation engagement spectrum. The session will be set up to be more interactive and even a little immersive to help demonstrate the techniques that the presenters have used with teens.

WOODWARD B


Speakers: Monae Verbeke, Shannon K. McManimon, Choua Her

Focusing on two science capital research studies by the Institute for Learning Innovation and the Science Museum of Minnesota, this roundtable provides space for a broader discussion on a) the newly emerging theoretical concept of science capital and its utility for understanding informal science learning (ISL) and engagement; b) how thinking about science capital can address issues of broadening diversity in ISL; and c) the opportunities and challenges for ISL, including the difficulty in measuring and evaluating this concept.
SATURDAY

CLOSING PLENARY & BREAKFAST - Venetian Ballroom - 8:00 am - 9:30 am

Dr. Porchia Moore

Dr. Porchia Moore dually earned her doctorate from the School of Library and Information Science and a Graduate Certificate in Museum Management from the McKissick Museum at the University of South Carolina. The recipient of the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) Laura Bush 21st Century fellowship, she is a museum visionary and activist-scholar who employs Critical Race Theory to interrogate museums and other cultural heritage spaces. Dr. Moore is part of the teaching faculty at Johns Hopkins University where she teaches courses on history and philosophy of Museums as well as a course she designed titled, Museums, Race, and Inclusion. We are excited not only by Dr. Moore’s attention to addressing damaging histories within her work, but by how she allows space for the voices of marginalized people to be heard as visitor studies works to better respect and value ways of knowing that differ from dominant cultural lenses. We believe she will serve as a valuable asset to our program because of how her projects (and others) work to intervene into these histories and highlight more equitable ways of knowing.

SESSION SIX - 9:45 am - 11:00 am

FOUNDERS A
Lifelong Learning Starts Here: Prioritizing Your Own Professional Learning Opportunities - Panel / Org. Change & Capacity Building
Speakers: Kate Livingston, Michelle Maghari, Kirsten Ellenbogen

We are dedicated to providing lifelong learning experiences for our visitors. It is important to also turn inward and advocate for your own learning. There is a broad range of learning opportunities, if only you know where to look. This session unpacks and demystifies opportunities to support our continued learning and professional development.

FOUNDERS B
Explore Value of Immersive Technology - Panel / Methods & Methodologies
Speakers: Imfan Hoi, Kathleen Finneran, Fran Mast, Stefanie Mabadi

As immersive technologies have been used increasingly in deepening visitors experience or showcasing findings effectively, significant questions remain on how immersive technologies can be best used to understand audiences attitude and behavior. This session is to explore insights on the values and impacts of using immersive technology in the field.

ESQUIRE ROOM
So Where is the Magic in Museums? Spiritual Ways of Knowing - Paper / CRE / Big Questions & Field-wide Issues
Speaker: Kiersten F. Latham

This paper offers a condensed distillation of evidence that museums should be acknowledging spiritual ways of knowing in their audiences. I introduce the emerging Spiritual Research Paradigm (2016), part of the contemplative turn in higher education, which provides both a platform for understanding and methodologies for gathering data. While these strategies are not developed for museum evaluation, they are ripe for informing and inspiring museums to be more intentional and inclusive.

ESQUIRE ROOM
Typology: A Crystal Ball to Map Visitor Behaviours? - Paper / Methods & Methodologies
Speaker: Karl St-Pierre

Typology is a common tool for visitor studies professionals working in museums. It simplifies the description of people visiting exhibitions or participating in guided tours and helps museums to better serve their visitors. In this session, participants will explore approaches to designing typographic visitor research. Specifically, the session advocates the idea of merging Cartesian and Empirical approaches to design research inquiries and develop useful typologies.

ESQUIRE ROOM
Trails of Walking, Ways of Talking. From Observation to Self-reflection - Paper / Methods & Methodologies
Speakers: Dimitra Christidou, Luise Reitstatter

This paper introduces Social Meaning Mapping (SMM), a new methodological way of knowing about visitor experience by incorporating visitors own narratives into data collected through in-gallery observations. We will present findings from a recent study we conducted using in-gallery observations, followed by a short questionnaire on visitors background and SMM.
WOODWARD A
Speakers: Elisa Israel, Stephen Ashton, PhD, Sena Dawes, Amy Niedbalski
Calling internal evaluators! Do you lead a department, manage budgets, work cross-departmentally? Join evaluators from a science center, zoo, history museum, and multidisciplinary facility to discuss the joys and challenges of internal evaluation. Through small-group discussions and large-group activities, share experiences and identify new directions for VSA’s Internal Evaluators FIG.

WOODWARD CD
Coloring Outside the Lines: Lessons Learned from Experimental Programs - Paper / CRE / Big Questions & Field-wide Issues
Speakers: Chris Cadenhead, Jessica Sickler, Ben Wiehe
Explore the challenges and breakthroughs of implementing and evaluating programs that ask, “What if we applied this proven model in a completely different setting?” From art museums training scientists, to science experiences deployed at the beach, we will discuss the unique aspects of moving successful programs outside of their comfort zones.

WOODWARD B
Lenses on Learning: How Study Design Shapes Interpretation of Results - Panel / Big Questions & Field-wide Issues
Speakers: Sasha Palmquist, PhD, Monae Verbeke, PhD, Eve Klein, M.Ed
How are opportunities for learning shaped by the complex interaction of context, design, and participant motivation? Three panelists will discuss the implications of study design on how analysis and interpretation are conducted and consider the ways in which adopting multiple perspectives can expand the usability and impact of our work.

SESSION SEVEN - 11:15 am - 12:30 pm
FOUNDERS A
Listen Up! Kids: STEM-focused Podcasts as Promising Family Learning Experiences - Panel / Reporting Findings
Speakers: Amy Grack Nelson
Kids’ podcasts are widely popular, but little research has been carried out to understand the value of this informal learning medium. Come hear how one research project has begun to build knowledge around families engagement with kids-focused STEM podcasts and how this new knowledge is being used by podcast developers.

FOUNDERS A
Multiple Definitions of Success for Makerspace Evaluations - Paper / Big Questions & Field-wide Issues
Speaker: Rebecca Teasdale
Makerspace activities are open-ended and self-directed, yet evaluations often measure success on predetermined, staff-identified target outcomes. This paper shares research on adult visitors definitions of success for a library makerspace and the relevance of staff-identified outcomes, raising questions about how multiple definitions of success can be incorporated into makerspace evaluations.

FOUNDERS A
Observing Empathy in Museum-based Engineering Activities - Panel / Reporting Findings
Speakers: ChangChia, James Liu, Susan Letourneau, Dorothy Bennett
This study addresses challenges in assessing and understanding complex factors of STEM learning in informal learning environments, and demonstrates how integrating different stakeholders perspectives in visitors studies can benefit activity development and research design.

WOODWARD A
Thinking Like an Evaluator: Capacity-Building at Two Children’s Museums - Roundtable
Speakers: Aubrey Henriksen, Jessica Sickler
How do you build evaluation capacity? This session explores how two children’s museums in Tennessee used different approaches to build an institutional culture of evaluation. We will share the processes and tools used, then follow it up with audience discussion to explore how other institutions might apply similar strategies.
FOUNDERS B
Design-Based Research that Integrates Researcher and Practitioner Ways of Knowing - Panel
Rae Ostman, Marta Beyer, Marcie Benne, Chris Cardiel
With educators and researchers working side by side, design-based research (DBR) projects can develop educational materials and refine a theoretical model simultaneously. In this session, team members will describe methods and practices for two DBR projects, share lessons learned, and discuss how the work benefited from different professional perspectives.

ESQUIRE ROOM
Understanding and Measuring Engagement: Perspectives from Informal STEM Learning and Science Communication - Panel
Melissa Ballard, Jamie Bell, John Besley, Kelly Riedinger
This interactive session will explore how interest and engagement are conceptualized and assessed in informal science education and science communication. We present themes from interviews with leading researchers and practitioners and share a suite of resources that we hope will advance related evaluative thinking in both fields.

WOODWORD A
Engaging with Community and Youth Advisory Boards - Roundtable
Ardice Hartry
Community-based and Youth-focused advisory groups can help draw connections between community needs and museum offerings. In order to be successful, they require trust, flexibility, funding, and appreciation for different ways of knowing. In this roundtable, museum professionals discuss best practices for creating and engaging with community-museum partnerships.

WOODWARD CD
Complex Collaboration: Lessons from a Longitudinal Evaluation involving Multiple Stakeholders - Panel
Ashlan Falletta-Cowden, Jenny Flowers, Michelle Rabkin, Eliza Bryant
Our panel will examine complexities that may arise from collaborations on longitudinal program evaluations that involve multiple institutions and stakeholders. We will delve into six topics using a case study and, through presentations and discussion with the audience, identify a series of best practices for addressing challenges in this area.

WOODWARD B
Evaluation for Equity, Access, and Inclusion: the Evaluator’s Role in Empowering the Visitor - Roundtable
Jessica Brown, Tracey Williams, Delisha Upshaw, Jennifer Evans
The Charles H. Wright Museum (Detroit, Michigan) is currently undergoing a 3-year initiative to build internal evaluation capacity. Evaluation can include and elevate voices and perspectives often discounted due to systemic oppression, but evaluation can also serve to reinforce oppression and misrepresent communities. How can evaluation be used to speak truth to power, rather than to reinforce existing power differentials? How might we best utilize evaluation to further equity, access, and inclusion? This roundtable session invites participants from all fields to explore these questions alongside Museum staff.
Poster Presenters:

1. **Sue Allen - A Conference on Informal STEM Learning in Rural Settings**  
   *Description:* Last September, NSF funded a small conference that brought together about 30 informal STEM professionals who do innovative work in rural settings. Representing ISE sectors such as citizen science, library programs, family outreach, and festivals, they shared their definitions of “rural,” as well as best practices, and ongoing challenges.

2. **Ardice Hartry - Using Collective Impact Framework for Internal Evaluations and Capacity Building**  
   *Description:* Our museum is a large institution, with many silo-ed departments that work on separate missions. Our strategic plan calls for a unified theory of action and related evaluation design. This poster presents the story of how we are using the collective impact framework to build evaluation capacity within our organization.

3. **Mariah Flanagan - Opening Doors: Integrating Mission with Evaluation**  
   *Description:* How do we ensure our institutional mission and values infuse themselves into everything we do – including our evaluation methodology? Explore how Conner Prairie is taking our interpretive practice of “Opening Doors” into the realm of evaluation, starting with our new Black Pioneers initiative.

4. **Su-Jen Roberts & Sarah Edmunds - Designing for and Measuring Affective Outcomes in an Aquarium Exhibit**  
   *Description:* We describe how the design of The New York Aquarium’s shark exhibit aimed to inspire feelings of awe and wonder in visitors. We also describe the results from the summative evaluation, which used interviews to assess the exhibit’s impact on affective outcomes, including visitors’ memorable moments and perceptions of sharks.

5. **Lisa-Anne DeGregoria Kelly & Sarah Breen Bartecki - Community Relationships & Conservation Leadership**  
   *Description:* Funded by NSF, “Supporting a Community’s Informal Education Needs: Confidence and Empowerment in STEM” (SCIENCES), is an initiative representing the Chicago Zoological Society (CZS) commitment to community partnerships. Applying lessons learned, CZS is launching the Conservation Leadership Academy, a suite of education programs sustained in several Chicago neighborhoods.

   *Description:* The University of Washington Museology Graduate Program, in partnership with the Wing Luke Museum of the Asian Pacific American Experience (The Wing), completed an evaluation study to understand community perceptions of the museum’s cultural narratives. Findings will inform marketing strategies, advancing a goal of The Wing’s strategic plan.

7. **Hannah Ridenour - Art Museums and Technology: New Metrics to Measure Visitor Engagement**  
   *Description:* A groundbreaking study measuring the impact of interactive technology for art museum visitors was recently completed by The Cleveland Museum of Art and Rockman et al. Come check out the biggest findings and learn about the development and methodology of a toolkit for use at additional museums!

8. **Abigail Pope, Taylor Sturgeon, & Nadya Bennett - Guest Perception of Visual Overload in Relation to Vendor Signage**  
   *Description:* Vendor signage is a popular method used to promote products and experiences. Unfortunately, too much vendor signage may overwhelm guests and influence decision-making (visual overload). The Columbus Zoo and Aquarium used various methods to explore guest perception of visual overload and its relation to purchasing decisions.
9 Laura Weiss - Emoji Evaluation: Measuring Youth’s Feelings Towards Nature
Description: The evaluation of Belle Isle Nature Center’s Summer Nature Camp explored the effect of camp activities on campers’ attitudes toward nature. We developed a pre/post survey using an emoji scale, resulting in a fun instrument that was understandable and relatable for youth aged 5-12.

10 Rita Deedrick - Young Multilingual Learners: A National Needs Assessment of Museums
Description: See the results of a study that examined the needs and practices of science centers and children’s museums as service providers related to linguistic inclusiveness in informal science programming for preschool children. The study was conducted with assistance from ASTC and ACM as part of an NSF Pathways project.

11 Lauren Scharf - How Are Museum Researching Their Visitors?: Examining Current Approaches
Description: This poster presents key findings from a national online survey of museum professionals, which sought to establish a baseline understanding of museum/cultural audience research, evaluation, and segmentation practices and assess recommendations and implications for the field.

12 Kelly Riedinger, Victoria Bonebrake, & Martin Storksdieck - Reframing Conversations Through Signage: Using Video to Capture Visitor Talk at Exhibits
Description: The poster will present information about a research study where we used video-based data collection to investigate how framing of interpretive signage influences visitors’ talk and behaviors at exhibits. We will share details of our methods as well as lessons learned from using cameras for capturing video of visiting groups.

13 Lynn Courtney - Presenting Art from Islamic Cultures: A Visitor-Centered Gallery Renovation
Description: The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston’s gallery housing art from Islamic cultures is currently undergoing a renovation and reinstallation project. This poster reports on a multi-phase formative study that included voices from Boston’s Muslim community and established baseline metrics against which to measure the renovated gallery’s success.

14 Allison Anderson - Big Numbers: Estimating Public Reach in a National Network
Description: This poster shares the process for estimating educational product reach across the country for the NISE Network’s Explore Science: Earth & Space project. Along with including data sources, estimation methods, and findings, this poster will share lessons learned and recommendations for evaluating public reach for other wide-spread projects.

15 Elise Walmsley & Jennifer Rigney - What’s Going On Over There?” Evaluating Unscheduled Performances Inside Exhibits
Description: What do visitors get from attending impromptu performances inside exhibit galleries? How can such performances be evaluated? Learn about visitor reactions to performances that rely solely on attracting visitors who happen to already be in the exhibit and the mixed-method approach that was used to evaluate them.

16 Victoria Bonebrake & Kelly Riedinger - Collecting Demographic and Behavioral Data through Stationary and Hat-Mounted Cameras
Description: The Center for Research on Lifelong STEM Learning will share lessons learned from a study that uses audio and video data from GoPros to investigate the entry characteristics of zoo and aquarium visitors and how those characteristics play out in terms of decision-making behaviors and meaning-making talk during a visit.
17 **Dolly Hayde & Rebecca Nall - Life Finds a Way: Evaluating WITH Visitors, Colleagues, and Spaces**

*Description:* All visitor studies involve practical considerations - but what if we embraced our unique contexts as an advantage? Summative evaluation of COSI’s AMNH Dinosaur Gallery exemplifies a mixed-methods approach that presents social science as a positive guest experience and a way to un-silo our work, particularly in “difficult” physical spaces.

18 **Gretchen Haupt & Hever Velazquez - Tinkering with Maker and Chemistry-Based Activity Facilitation Frameworks**

*Description:* How do you adapt a facilitation framework focused on making and tinkering experiences to understand the impact of facilitation strategies on visitors’ attitudes interest, sense of relevance and feelings of self-efficacy about chemistry activities? The ChemAttitudes research team tinkered with this question and has the answers!

19 **Owen Weitzman - Understanding the Role of Facilitation in Informal Chemistry Activities**

*Description:* This poster discusses research methods and summarizes findings about the role of facilitation in informal chemistry activities from the “Explore Science: Let’s Do Chemistry” research study. In-depth description of two rounds of video analysis of trained facilitators interpreting chemistry activities for members of the public will be shared.

20 **Megan Goeke & Hever Velazquez - Weaving it Together: Implementing Unified Evaluation Processes Across an Institution**

*Description:* Internal Evaluators are often asked for insights concerning a museum’s overarching objectives but necessarily focus on unique programmatic needs. Using shared questions and a cumulative dataset across programs, we are able to address our museum-wide concerns, specifically variations in visitor demographics, benchmarking experience ratings, and how visitors engage over time.

21 **Alexandra Olivares - The Museum Visitor: An Examination of Race and Participation**

*Description:* Museum attendance is declining, additionally, the existing museum visitor is not reflective of the diversity present in communities around the nation. We examine whether museum participants are racially diverse and explore motivations and barriers by conducting a logistic regression analysis to test the effect of race on participation.

22 **Amy Grack Nelson - Ways of Knowing Through Social Media and Other Audience Feedback**

*Description:* Many organizations have informal ways of knowing about their audience through comments on social media, reviews left on websites, and emails sent to an organization. This poster will share what you can learn from this type of data and how it can inform other data collection methods.

23 **Ashley Wunder - Project Visit: Designing & Testing for a Visitor-Centered Website**

*Description:* Project Visit details the literature review and mixed-methods, formative evaluation developed for the Kansas Historical Society as they embarked on the initial phase of their website redevelopment. This poster will discuss best practices for website design and usability and share insights from Project Visit’s surveys and focus groups.

24 **Beverly Serrell - The Metascattergram: A Tracking-and-Timing Database**

*Description:* A Tracking-and-Timing Database for 65 museum exhibitions is presented as a graphic chart. The Metascattergram allows a comparison of two metrics—the Sweep Rate Index and the Percentage of Diligent Visitors, which are direct measures of the degree of visitor engagement in an exhibition.
25 Lisa-Anne DeGregoria Kelly - Zoo Staff and Volunteer Professional Development in Informal Science Learning

Description: Funded by IMLS, “Common Foundations in Informal Science Learning for Zoo Staff and Volunteers” is professional development being designed at Chicago Zoological Society’s Brookfield Zoo for individuals with a variety of zoo roles. “Common Foundations” is undergoing iterative revision through a cycle of design, field-testing, evaluation and reflection, and redesign.
Our Vision
A world that honors all children and respects the diverse ways in which they learn and develop.

Build Capacity and Support Excellence of Children’s Museums
- Build our members’ capacity to proactively respond to critical issues
- Connect our members with current research and evidence to inform practice
- Facilitate and strengthen partnerships between our members and other organizations.

Our Mission
ACM champions children’s museums worldwide.

Promote and Champion Children’s Museums
- Bolster positive public perception of children’s museums
- Articulate and communicate field identity
- Promote attendance and engagement of children’s museums
- Increase media visibility of children’s museums and ACM

Strategic Roadmap

ACM is a community of more than 300 member museums all over the world, sharing the same vision: a world that honors all children. We’re on our way to make this vision our reality.

Let’s go!

Join us next year in St. Louis from May 5-8 for InterActivity 2020:
PLAY The Long Game. Learn more at www.ChildrensMuseums.org

Museum master planning
Exhibit and graphic design
Interpretive planning and development
Visitor studies and evaluation
Interactive engineering and media
Fabrication and turnkey installation

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