

**A Museum Educators Toolkit:
How Knowing Ourselves Transforms Our Work**

A Reflection Paper

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
Degree of Master of Arts in Cultural Sustainability, Goucher College,
Baltimore, 2018.

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Abstract

This project seeks to explore narratives¹ of identity as they relate to how public educators engage with audience in museum spaces. It is centered on the power of memory, story and learning and how each of these become critical tools for educators interested in exploring how their identities can transform the work they do. This paper provides an introduction to the final body of work produced by this research, a toolkit titled: *A Museum Educator's Identity Toolkit: how knowing ourselves transforms our work*, which provides educators with a way to begin to explore their personal identities and the way those various identities connect to society, to privilege and oppression, and how these identities impact their museum space and its future.

¹ **NARRATIVE:** A story of any kind. Different **cultures** have a differing “sense of story” telling them what is and isn’t appropriately narrative.

An Opening Letter and its Story

The Museum Educator's Toolkit opens with a letter. I address it to museum educators, more specifically, a museum family. Whether you are a part of a museum environment in your work life, enjoy visiting museums for leisure or are curious to find out why and if museums can be a place that feels like home, I invite you to be my family too. Families (chosen or blood) challenge us to think deeply about the world, celebrate what has been done well, and hopefully own our mistakes and do better. This letter is my way of embracing what my family does for me and what I hope to do with them in the future. It reads:

Museum Family,

This toolkit was created by a museum educator who after seeing one of their rarely visible identities, represented in a museum space, began engaging with others about why identity and representation matter. They are not an expert of the following knowledge. You are an agent of your own learning and come to this space with your own important knowledge, experiences and talent.

While this has been designed with educators in mind, if you work in a museum, botanic garden, outdoor education center, park, community center or anywhere that connects you and others in any capacity, this is for you.

You are encouraged, no matter where you are in your journey: to open your heart, do your own work, learn everything you can, appreciate the important gifts you offer and love your museum. This couldn't happen without you!

Let's move forward together.

Well, then, let's.

Ask me, then, if I believe in the spirit of the things as they were used, and I'll say yes. They're all here. All the things which had uses. All the mountains which had names. And we'll never be able to use them without feeling uncomfortable. And somehow the mountains will never sound right to us; we'll give them new names, but the old names are there, somewhere in time, and the mountains were shaped and seen under those names. The names we'll give to the canals and mountains and cities will fall like so much water on the back of a mallard. No matter how we touch Mars, we'll never touch it. And then we'll get mad at it, and you know what we'll do? We'll rip it up, rip the skin off, and change it to fit ourselves.²

Ray Bradbury, *The Martian Chronicles*

Introduction: The Power of Story

This quote resonates with me as I enter my workplace in the early morning. The entrances' high ceilings and tile floors capture the echoes of my footsteps.

As I make my way through the museum's many gallery spaces, I can hear and feel the hum of the items and objects housed there. They are breathing and waiting for hundreds of eyes and hands and ears and mouths which throughout the day, will open and close and touch and recoil and react with fascination and questions and wonderings. Each item carries a story of how it was made, where it is from, why it matters.

The art of storytelling invokes deep emotion. When I read *The Martian Chronicles*, I feel connected to the characters, the landscape and the history woven throughout the stories' tapestry. When I visit museums, I have little trouble finding something to connect to, to the stories of the items there.

Stories, as wonderful as they may be, are not perfect. Bradbury's words, while not speaking directly of museums, still become a critical introduction to what I critique most about museums and their history. This includes a long and (often) painful history of curators and collectors traveling to places, acquiring cultural resources³ without consent, naming them and molding them to fit the perceptions of "curation" and becoming the so-called "experts" of their stories. In museums, there is a tradition of removing the identity from items and culture and claiming that for the purposes of education and research and science, this has been a necessary process. While I love museums deeply, I am here to argue otherwise.

² Bradbury, Ray, (1958). *The Martian Chronicles*. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 67.

³ According to the National Park Service, *Cultural Resources* are: "tangible remains of past human activity. These may include buildings; structures; prehistoric sites; historic or prehistoric objects or collection; rock inscription; earthworks, canals, or landscapes. These nonrenewable resources may yield unique information about past societies and environments, and provide answers for modern day social and conservation problems. Although many have been discovered and protected, there are numerous forgotten, undiscovered, or unprotected cultural resources in rural America." National Park Service (NPS). Feb, 26, 2015. Cultural Resources. https://www.nps.gov/acad/learn/management/rm_culturalresources.htm. Accessed July 6, 2018.

This project developed after many years of conversations in three different museum communities. I noticed fellow educators expressing the desire to explore more deeply how social systems and identity impact their work. Conversations that began with, “I was teaching this class today and I think something strange happened,” were quick to evolve into, “I want to try to remove gender from this program when I teach to accommodate more students.”

So, how do we put these desires into practice?

Museum Educators are tasked with presenting information and story to students and the general public in the fields of everything from art to science to history. To do so in a way that meets the needs of many audience experiences, this paper argues, requires deep inquiry and reflection into identity and how self-awareness and knowledge of oneself can change how we relate to our communities, curriculum and the future of our museums.

Cultural Sustainability Connections

This work draws inspiration from the field of Cultural Sustainability, a degree (at Goucher College) and discipline that seeks new ways to work with communities to create long lasting practices for preserving aspects of culture. The description of the program on Goucher’s website states best its practices and outcomes,

In this era of increasing homogeneity and globalization, local history, traditions, and ways of life are among our most endangered resources and precious assets. By strengthening and building on the foundations of these resources-whether artistic, linguistic, musical, economic, or environmental-we can begin to counter the powerful forces that endanger communities around the world. Our M.A. in Cultural Sustainability brings together knowledge from anthropology, history, folklore, ethnomusicology, communications, business and management, linguistics, and activism to teach students how to effect positive, community-driven change in the cultures they care about most... The discipline of cultural sustainability can be and will be applied wherever valued ways-of-life are at risk.⁴

Museums have a similar mission. To work in a space without recognizing the impact of the history of the museum as an institution and its role in colonization and other forms of systematic oppression, would be inauthentic, a point examined deeply by this discipline.

The work I have participated in while in this program as well as the readings and learning that accompanied it can be summarized in the following quote by Folklorist and Curator of the Smithsonian Folklife Festival, Olivia Caldaival who states of her work in festival,

My role as curator is to broker different levels of expectations among funders, sponsors, collaborators, and partners, and in the process engage the featured communities to

⁴ "MA in Cultural Sustainability (MACS)." Goucher College. Accessed July 17, 2018. <https://www.goucher.edu/learn/graduate-programs/ma-in-cultural-sustainability/>.

imagine their reality, frame their issues, and shape their identity in a public setting. That is to say, my role is to facilitate a process in which cultural practitioners do not simply participate in an event, but rather form an integral part of the curatorial dialogue.⁵

The result of this research, provides evidence of my ability to complete cultural broker work in my field. The final product, a toolkit, invites individuals working in the museum field as Educators to learn more about their own identity as it relates to race, ethnicity, class, gender, gender identity and expression, ability, language, belief system or anti-theism, sexuality and other privileges and oppressions which construct human relations throughout history and today. Educators have the opportunity by engaging with the toolkit to participate in exercises which explore power, positionality, personal experience and ways of celebrating and examining their work and museum. Topics explored in this toolkit are directly influenced by the field of Cultural Sustainability.

Why the Museum?

When I was in elementary school, my class took a field trip to the Denver Museum of Nature and Science in Denver, Colorado. I can remember being filled with excitement. I checked my backpack over and over to make sure my permission slip made it home to be signed by my mother. A week or so before the field trip was to take place, I woke up with chicken pox. I wasn't able to attend the field trip with my twin brother and was devastated. I was fortunate enough to grow up with class privilege and access to reliable transportation, so on the weekend, my mother could afford to take both my brother and I back to the museum for a visit.

A T-Rex skeleton looms just inside the entrance and upon seeing it for the first time, I can remember thinking, *someday I want to work here*. That memory continues to inform the work I do in museums today. When I asked other educators to recount their own first experiences with museums, their stories were similar. One educator interviewed recalls the excitement of seeing a dinosaur skeleton they had only previously read about in books:

So my memory is coming around the bend and seeing the dinosaur skeleton and just feeling a shiver and just being like, (gasp)! Cause that was the first time I had ever seen a dinosaur skeleton. I had seen pictures in books and watched all the dinosaur movies but this was the first time seeing one in person so that was a huge moment for me. One of the reasons I love museum education is because we have the power to create moments like that. I remember that more than twenty years later, I remember it exactly.⁶

Another educator also expresses amazement, but at seeing themselves represented and how it encouraged them to study global studies in college:

...I came here on a field trip as a child. I remember it being the first time my heritage was reflected back to me in a historical context because the history we had always been taught was very Eurocentric, even if it was local it was about those who were Europeans and I

⁵ Caldaval, Olivia. (2016). "Festival Practice and the Curator's Role," in *Curatorial Conversations: Cultural Representation and the Smithsonian Folklife Festival*. University Press of Mississippi. 158.

⁶ Interview, Educator A, 2018. MET.CEJ. AO1.mp3. April, 30 2018.

didn't identify with them...coming to this museum sparked that I didn't even know that my people had a history and that clicked in my brain. The opportunity to learn more about myself and my people opened the door for me and that's how I got involved in global studies.⁷

Stories like these remind me of why I do what I do.

I have been working in museum spaces as an educator for the past six years. During this time, I have served additional roles in museums in visitor service, education coordination, gallery maintenance, collection handling, teaching, acting and performing. While this does not make me an expert by any means and I can only speak from my own experience, having this background both influences and reaffirms my desire to carry out this project, as well as my desire to continue to work for this field.

My passion for and interest in identity and social constructions stem from a life long journey of personal and communal growth, a journey I know I will be on for the rest of my life. It is my intention that throughout this project, I make transparent both my social position and location, and make very clear how my own privileges and inherent biases impact my ability to explore deeply some of the content and the implications of that content.

According to the International Council of Museums (ICOM) 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.⁸

While places of joy, excitement and discovery as cited in the examples from educators above, Museums are also institutions which have long been participants in the mistreatment and social exclusion of non-privileged communities, their cultural resources and knowledge.⁹

This project adds to the research I have spent my graduate time diving into, has increased my awareness of ways my identity influences my educational pedagogy and has strengthened my own ability to further engage with communities and develop new ways to benefit this field. My work in museums and my desire to continue to do so influences this work.

Framework for this Project

My framework for this project is largely inspired by the work I do and attempt to do as a Museum Educator on a daily basis.

When developing this project, I selected literature on identity, museums, and decolonization, based on the construction of one's identity with the understanding that the historic trauma

⁷ Interview, Educator D 2018. MET.CEJ. AO1.mp3. May 29, 2018.

⁸ "Museum Definition," *International Council of Museums*. Accessed April 18th, 2018. <http://icom.museum/the-vision/museum-definition/>.

⁹ Lonetree, Amy. (2012). *Decolonizing museums: representing native America in national and tribal museums*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

created by colonization and many museums' past and current participation in dominating the narrative, greatly impact how educators view and treat visitors and how programming is created.

Ethnographic methods used in this study included conducting six interviews with educators working at different museums. Per my consent agreement with each, I have adhered to a confidentiality agreement under which I have disclosed neither their real names or the names of their workplaces. More information about these interviews can be found in the Selected Transcripts and other Appendixes section of this paper. It should be noted that I have worked at the three museums where I interviewed fellow educators. This was intentional, as it is with these colleagues that I began discussing identity and a need for more deep learning. Knowing them, and the environments they are working in made it possible to ask deep questions and critically explore what identity means to them and their work and had influence on what I included in the toolkit.

Participation and Collaboration

Much of the work done in the creation of this toolkit was introspective. I am aware that this work will likely never be complete, as identity is fluid and different for everyone. Since I am not an expert and cannot speak for anyone but myself, the future of this work will include carefully orchestrated inclusion of many other voices and ways of knowing.

I moved from one state to another midway through this project and conducted all but one of my six interviews in an online format. One interview was completed in person. Educators interviewed came from three different museum environments, all of which I have and had worked in previously. I am familiar with the spaces, the style and the specificity of work done at each. While this can also be addressed from an ethical perspective, I found that this made it more accessible when speaking about a deep topic like identity and feel that it will be beneficial when I workshop the toolkit with these museums in the future, which is one of my project future goals.

Methodologies and Pedagogy

This project used autoethnography as a primary source of gathering information. Autoethnography is a qualitative approach to studying oneself in relation to one's work. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2000) "...qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meaning people bring to them."¹⁰

Autoethnography has been described in the field of study as being a useful way to connect the personal to the cultural and explore intentionally the consciousness behind a study.¹¹

I choose to engage in autoethnography when creating this work because I knew that I would be unable to separate myself in a complete objective manner from what I chose to focus on in the toolkit and the way I interacted with educators. Being mindful of this meant, being aware of how

¹⁰ Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2000). "Introduction: The discipline and practice of qualitative research." In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research*. London: Sage, 1-28.

¹¹ Bochner, A. P., & Ellis, C. (2006). "Communication as autoethnography." In G. J. Shepherd J. S. John & T. Striphas (Eds.), *Communication as ...: Perspectives on theory*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 13-21.

I was receiving information and when I was projecting my own ideas onto others, I found it helpful to keep a personal journal throughout this process to navigate these thoughts.

Reed-Danahay's (1997) work was helpful because it assigns three main characteristics to auto ethnography: (1) The role of the autoethnographer in the narrative: Is the autoethnographer an insider or an outsider of the phenomenon being described? (2) Whose voice is being heard: who is speaking, the people under investigation or the researcher? (3) Cultural displacement: some realities are being described by people who have been displaced from their natural environment due to political or social issues.¹²

I was inspired to use the questions above as a critical tool for inquiry. In answering them about myself: 1) I am an insider into my specific museum community and an insider into the education within the institution. I am an outsider to many visitor and fellow educator's experience because of my white, class, educational and ability passing privileges; 2) These privileges also mean that my voice is often first to be heard and taken seriously. While in the role of an educator, my voice is often privileged as being "expert," an educational practice this work seeks to dismantle and that I reflect upon; and 3) Some identities addressed in this project are the result of cultural displacement (in the case of museums often cultural resources of indigenous peoples for instance) and exercises developed to examine this were created by reflecting on scenarios I have used with students and young people in museums. An example I have used when interpreting history for a historic site to begin a discussion about colonization:

Imagine your home. What does it look like? Feel like? What do you hear? Smell? Who is there? Describe it to your neighbor. Now imagine, people you do not know, who do not look like you or speak your language come into your home and tell you and your family that you, your language, your religion and your way of life are wrong. You and your family are forced to move far from where you live and the colonizers, the people who removed you from your land, try to make you like them. How does this feel? Is it fair? Why are we talking about this where we are today?¹³

When creating activities for the toolkit, I felt it necessary to complete and reflect on them myself. Autoethnography became an important tool for me throughout this work as it granted me a chance to reflect regularly on my own social position and location when it came to creating pages in the toolkit on identities that are not my own. It is critical to my practice and personal pedagogy and one I defend with confidence.

Review of the Literature

While the toolkit created as a result of this research has been designed with educators who work in museums in mind, the toolkit covers topics from story to racism to self-reflection and could ideally be used by anyone interested. Critical questions and exercises created in and for the toolkit are influenced by critical identity and education pedagogy and this literature review reflects such.

¹² Reed-Danahay, D. E. (1997). Introduction. In D. E. Reed-Danahay (Ed.), *Auto/ethnography: Rewriting the self and the social*. Oxford: Berg, 1-

¹³ The scenario used here is drawn from my own work in a museum gallery space.

It is important to note that the following review of literature is not an exhaustive list and is not intended to reflect all necessary and current research in the studies of identity and the field of Museum studies. There are however, key literary works that have influenced my learning as a Graduate student and a cultural worker in the Museum field. My own limitations must be considered throughout this process and the collection of literature I have been able to access and reference has been no exception.

The rationale for compiling this literature review is to highlight that while both museums and identity theory have been subjects of debate and academic study, they continue to be written about and assessed. Identity is recognized as being salient, fluid and ever changing and it can therefore be assumed that there will always be new research and ideas to explore.

While there has been much research on identity formation in the field of psychology, social and communal theory and social constructions like race, gender and class (etc.) in sociology and identity formation as it plays out in the classroom, there remains a gap pertaining to the specificity of this topic in relation to identity of educators working in public or informal space. While the majority of JSTOR resources are from as early as 2006, independent sites like *Incluseum* based out of Seattle Washington, provide up to date museum education work around whiteness, diversity and inclusion. Educators and museum cultural workers can guest blog from museums located anywhere and open discussion around the issues addressed in this paper.¹⁴

The field of Museum Studies has been recently attempting to contend with issues such as public disengagement,¹⁵ the ethical nature of repatriation,¹⁶ and decisions to remove (or not remove) from public display, according to the wishes of ancestral communities of the culture¹⁷. As museums as a whole attempt to define what makes them relevant to the public and cultural knowledge today, there remains a need for inclusive pedagogical thought around topics like decolonization, accessibility and othering.

A section of this project's literature review labeled: *The Role of Identity in Museum [Public] Space*, provides a brief history of the museum as an institution and what is being written about museums owning and navigating that history today.

The works in this review are organized thematically in accordance with the structure of the toolkit. I used online search data bases such as WorldCat and Google Scholar, and physical books on identity, museums and education as well as online articles and blog posts to locate research, both historic and current. I also drew from everyday experience working with my own group of educators.

Literature Inspiration and Framework

¹⁴ "About." The Incluseum. July 05, 2018. Accessed July 17, 2018. <https://incluseum.com/about/>.

¹⁵ Beaty, Bob. "Running the Numbers on Attendance at History Museums in the U.S." *Hyperallergic*. <https://hyperallergic.com/429788/running-the-numbers-on-attendance-at-history-museums-in-the-us/>.

¹⁶ Simpson, M. (2009), "Museums and restorative justice: heritage, repatriation and cultural education". *Museum International*, 61: 121-129. Accessed April 10, 2018. doi:[10.1111/j.1468-0033.2009.01669.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-0033.2009.01669.x)

¹⁷ Daley, Paul. "Preservation or plunder? The battle over the British Museum's Indigenous Australian show," (2015). *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2015/apr/09/indigenous-australians-enduring-civilisation-british-museum-repatriation>. Accessed March 12, 2018.

When first thinking of how to approach this project, I needed information on how identity comes to be. I wanted to be able to ask educators about stories of memory, early life and how they came to be where they are today, and knew I couldn't do so without understanding where identity begins. My Capstone Advisor, Roxanne Kymaani graciously lent me some books which included works by Eric Erickson (1980), a developmental psychologist known for his eight stages of development, who contends that identity formation does not end during adolescence, but rather that identity formation is an on-going process that continues and evolves throughout adulthood.¹⁸ When I consider my own various identities and that they have rarely remained stagnant, I have to agree with Erickson's assertion.

Other works of literature which aided in my understanding of identity formation and development included Beckett and Taylor (2013) who express that emotional, psychological, intellectual and social changes occur from infancy through old age. Transitions made from childhood to adolescence to adulthood to old age are examined throughout. This text proved informative to my research as it provided information on development necessary to have knowledge of when examining identity formation and its process.¹⁹

Educators in museum settings often work with youth and young people of all ages and it is therefore useful to connect to these experiences. Learning about social, emotional and cultural development can aid us in understanding behaviors, needs and learning outcomes when facilitating, creating new programming and doing general greeting with young visitors.

Literature in psychology and child development is adamant that identity formation and the ways we learn to act, behave and feel are learned early on in life. These early stages have a long lasting effect on who people become and how they see themselves in relation to themselves and identity groups they belong to.

An exploration of the study and science of identity would not be complete without a review of social identity. Burke (2006) defines social identity as, "...a social psychological analysis of the role of self- conception in group membership, group processes, and intergroup relations."²⁰ The theory is, "explicitly framed by a conviction that collective phenomena cannot be adequately explained in terms of isolated individual processes or interpersonal interaction alone."²¹ It is a theory that provides a core from which psychologists and sociologists can understand the associations and interactions between individuals and the social worlds they inhabit.

The work of Brown (2000) in addition to the work of Burke impacted my understanding of social vs. individual identity theory, an important consideration when thinking about how educators form their own identities.²² While Burke contends that an identity group is a self-conceptualized thought, and, "...exists psychologically if three or more people construe and evaluate themselves in terms of shared attributes that distinguish themselves collectively from other people" Brown

¹⁸ Erikson, E. H. (1980). *Identity and the life cycle*. New York, NY, US: W W Norton & Co.

¹⁹ Beckett, Chris and Taylor, Hilary. (2010). *Human Growth and Development*. Sage Publications Inc. Thousand Oaks: California.

²⁰ Burke, P. (2006). Social Identity Theory. In *Contemporary Social Psychological Theories* (pp. 111-118). Stanford University Press.

²¹ Burke (2006).

²² Brown, R. (2000). Social Identity Theory: Past achievements, current problems and future challenges. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 30, 745-778.

asserts that the theory starts with the assumption that social identity is derived primarily from group memberships.

British social psychologists Henri Tajfel and John Turner (1986) asserted that people act differently depending on the social groups they belong to. Tajfel defined social identity as, “the individual’s knowledge that he belongs to certain social groups together with some emotional and value significance to him of this group membership.”²³

As one educator said in a personal correspondence:

I think of one's sense of self. Your identity can be varied, depending on what you're involved in at the time. For example, At the museum, my identity is mainly that of an educator, while at home, I am primarily a husband, father and grandparent. They all make up your identity, but different aspects can come to the front at different times.²⁴

According to the literature listed above, when a person identifies themselves to be a part of a group it becomes an ‘ingroup.’ A person can also belong to an identity group but feel they do not belong there and this becomes an ‘outgroup.’ I looked to this literature because I wanted to form guiding questions and activities for educators that explored their sense of belonging both within their museum communities and outside of them.

Literary Works on Collective Consciousness and Community Identity

When interviewing educators as part of the project, I asked them if they identified with being an educator and part of a museum community. Being a part of an education team in a museum, I think, is being a part of an identity group and it was important for me to gather if others in my field also felt that they too become part of a collective identity. A collective identity may have first been constructed by outsiders who still enforce it but depends on some acceptance to those to whom it is applied. Collective identities are expressed in cultural materials-names, narratives, symbols, verbal styles, rituals, clothing.²⁵

According to Snow (2001) in *Collective Identity and Expressive Forms*,

Although there is no consensual definition of collective identity, discussions of the concept invariably suggest that its ‘essence resides in a shared sense of ‘one-ness’ or ‘we-ness’ anchored in real or imagined shared attributes and experiences among those who comprise the collectivity, and in relation or contrast to one of more actual sets of ‘others’.²⁶

Do museum educators experience a ‘one-ness’ or ‘we-ness’? Can it be based only on their connections to their work as an educator when there are so many other complex identities at

²³ Turner, J. C., & Tajfel, H. (1986). “The social identity theory of intergroup behavior.” *Psychology of intergroup relations*, 7-24.

²⁴ Personal communication with author. June 21st, 2018.

²⁵ Francesca Polletta and James M. Jasper. “Collective Identity and Social Movements.” *Annual Review of Sociology*. 2001 27:1, 283-305

²⁶ Snow, D. (2001). “Collective Identity and Expressive Forms.” *UC Irvine: Center for the Study of Democracy*. Accessed April 16, 2018. <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/2zn1f7bj>

play? Questions like these encouraged me to consult literature not just on identity formation but on the more complex systems that impact its creation and development.

Literary Works on Identity and Social Construction

Knowing that I would be speaking to educators directly about systems of privilege and oppression and including information about these in the toolkit, I consulted Allan G. Johnson's work (2001) who examines and attempts to deconstruct systems of privilege and difference in society. The term "difference" in place of "oppression" provides the reader, whom Johnson assumes to be White, with a way to approach systems of inequality through a critical lens. Johnson provides in-depth examples of privilege as it both exists and influences the lives of people. Sections like, "We can't heal until the wounding stops,"²⁷ outlines the ways in which good intentions cannot undo the pain created via historical oppression and that a band aid approach to community healing is coming from a place of illusion.

Abby Ferber's work (2009), is another excellent resource for examining a wide array of privileges, as she argues that understanding social construction is critical to understanding identity both individually and communally. Identity, Ferber asserts, is created and shaped not only by individual experiences and the way someone connects with them, but by group memberships. I agree with Ferber's assertion and see in my work as an educator, the need for a deep, inquisitive understanding of systems created by society to divide identity groups and create dominance by some over others. I strongly believe that to be a better educator one must know oneself and to do so requires an understanding of privileges and oppressions one is a member of.

The dominant groups have given priority to their own experiences and places in the world and have constructed *serviceable* others: that is constructed others so as to be of service to the dominant groups' own needs, values, interests and points of view. Indeed, although its specific forms may have changed throughout Western history, the Western project has had an unnerving continuity: dominant groups constructing *serviceable* others.²⁸

These resources were useful not only when I was including various examples of privilege and oppression in the toolkit, but when I was considering how to introduce privilege with key questions and exercises for educators to engage with.

Literary Works on Intersectionality

An examination of privilege and oppression would not be complete without an understanding of intersectionality. The term *intersectionality* is attributed to legal scholar, Kimberlé Crenshaw, and her 1989 essay, "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color." Crenshaw coined the term to express the particular and specific problems that Black women face and, how it was necessary to address, why their issues were

²⁷ Johnson, Allan G. (2001). *Privilege, Power and Difference*. Boston: McGraw-Hill.

²⁸ Sampson, Edward E. (2008). *Celebrating the Other: A Dialogic Account of Human Nature*. Taos Institute: Chagrin Falls, Ohio. 4.

being ignored by both the feminist and anti-racism movements of the time.²⁹ Intersectionality continues to be referenced and examined in both movements today.

Intersectionality is an analytic sensibility, a way of thinking about identity and its relationship to power. Originally articulated on behalf of black women, the term brought to light the invisibility of many constituents within groups that claim them as members, but often fail to represent them. Intersectional erasures are not exclusive to black women. People of color within LGBTQ movements; girls of color in the fight against the school-to-prison pipeline; women within immigration movements; trans women within feminist movements; and people with disabilities fighting police abuse — all face vulnerabilities that reflect the intersections of racism, sexism, class oppression, transphobia, able-ism and more.³⁰

Intersectionality asserts that people can experience many identities at once and therefore be impacted by many different systems at once. It also is important to make clear that while everyone has many identities, which ones are in the position of power impact how someone is treated over another. For example, someone can experience systematic oppression and difficulty because they are disabled and the world is not created with disabled folks in mind, but if they are white, their struggles will not be equal to someone who faces discrimination based both on disability and race, like a disabled person of color.

As a white educator, is it important that I go back again and again to sources on the power of whiteness. Dryer (2002) says, “... as long as whiteness is felt to be the human condition, then it alone both defines normality and fully inhabits it ... the equation of being white with being human secures a position of power overwhelmingly because it is not seen as whiteness, but as normal.”³¹ When engaging in conversations with educators, the need for addressing whiteness in the museum world, a field that remains predominately white, was common one. Educators who were white were aware of their whiteness and its impact:

I love museums, I love going to them, I visit them when I travel, I feel really comfortable in them, they are my place. A part of that is because I can be certain that anytime I walk into a museum, no matter where it is that I’m going to be able to walk in and see someone who looks exactly like me within minutes. That’s going to be someone at the front area taking tickets, that’s going to be someone on security, education staff and people in leadership and I can’t help but notice some of these things when I walk around in a museum, especially how many general visitors walking around on the floor are white. That’s where a lot of my power is, that I’m white and I don’t have the risk of walking into a space and having to think, “Oh, am I supposed to be here, is my being here going to make anyone feel like I’m out of place?” I can’t tell you how many times I’ve gone to hang out in a Starbucks and not ordered anything for many minutes and the cops have

²⁹ Crenshaw, Kimberlé Williams (1991). Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color. *Stanford Law Review* 43 (6):1241-99.

³⁰ Crenshaw, Kimberlé “Why Intersectionality Can’t Wait” Washington Post sept 24th, 2015. Accessed June3, 2018.

https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/in-theory/wp/2015/09/24/why-intersectionality-cant-wait/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.b677e11dfbed

³¹ Dyer, R. (2002). The matter of whiteness. In Rothenberg, & Rothenberg, Paula S. (Ed.), *White privilege: Essential readings on the other side of racism*. New York: Worth, 9-14.

never been called on me. No one ever looks at me and thinks, I don't know if she's really supposed to be here.³²

Another interviewee reflects on whiteness being a part of their early life and daily experience and how this has on an impact on their work in gathering audience insights:

I think privilege plays such an important role in the work we do. The biggest area of privilege that most directly impacts my work is probably that I'm white. I grew up in a white, predominately English speaking family in an area what is also largely white. It impacts my work in a few ways... The research done in my field is largely constructed by white people. It's only in the last decade or so (in my opinion) that research methodologies, etc have really changed to meaningfully engage with non-dominant cultures. The second is that I carry personal privilege in my work when it comes to my whiteness. For instance, when it comes to community research. Despite the fact that I can carry on an interview in Spanish, I understand that my whiteness could make people uncomfortable or like they couldn't be themselves, so when it comes to going into community, going to people's homes, I always select research assistants that are bilingual, but also bicultural to hopefully aid in some of that natural discomfort that can come with this type of research.³³

Perspectives like these and others from educators, influenced both literary works consulted and information included in the toolkit.

Literary Works on Decolonization and Constructing the Other

I am fortunate enough to have worked in and currently be working in museums interested in the practice of decolonization. I say fortunate because it is the type of deep, intentional work I think museums are meant to do. The quote from the *Martian Chronicles* that I selected as my introduction to this paper is a metaphor for colonization, a practice museums have a history with since their inception.

Lonetree's (2012) work, *Decolonizing Museums* had great impact on my framing when including colonization and a pathway to decolonize in my toolkit. Colonization is the process through which "indigenous bodies, land and possessions have been and continue to be appropriated by settlers for their own uses and the process through which indigenous beliefs and cultural practices are criminalized and outlawed."³⁴

Museums cannot hope to do work with Native and Indigenous communities without a deep understanding of if, and how, cultural resources were unethically removed from communities without consent. Literature by Native and Indigenous authors like Lonetree (2012), Sleeper-Smith (2009) and Kovach (2009), were important for framing language I used in the toolkit to define colonization and invite educators to consider ways in which museums can begin to undo these practices.

³² Interview, Educator A.

³³ Personal Communication, Educator C. 5/21/18.

³⁴ Lonetree, Amy. (2012). *Decolonizing museums: representing native America in national and tribal museums*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

Literary Works on Pedagogy and Learning

Pedagogy, the method and practice of teaching, is a daily part of museum educator work. hooks' (1994), *Teaching to transgress: education as the practice of freedom*, and Paulo Freire's (2000) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* had an influence on my pedagogy prior to when I thought I would be an educator. After reading both books and using them to engage middle school students during an undergraduate internship, I started to think education was something I might be capable of. In my own education work, I embrace the performative aspect both authors speak of and a theme which emerged from my interviews with educators, was that for them it is also significant.

Teaching is a performative act. And it is that aspect of our work that offers the space for change, invention, spontaneous shifts, that can serve as a catalyst drawing out the unique elements in each classroom. To embrace the performative aspect of teaching we are compelled to engage audiences, to consider issues of reciprocity. Teachers are not performers in the traditional sense of the word in that our work is not meant to be a spectacle. Yet it is meant to serve as a catalyst that calls everyone to become more and more engaged, to become active participants in learning. Just as the way we perform changes, so should our sense of "voice." In our everyday lives we speak differently to diverse audiences. We communicate best by choosing that way of speaking that is informed by the particularity and uniqueness of whom we are speaking to and with.³⁵

Throughout the toolkit, educators are asked to come back to and engage deeply with their own pedagogy and how it is interconnected with their identities.

Literature on Identity and Place

The final section of the toolkit examines educators in their museum and the identity of place and space. To create this section, I turned to literature on place identity. *Place identity* is a core concept in the field of environmental psychology which proposes that identities form in relation to environments. Dixon (2004) explains that place identity is a part of a person's self-identity and that the knowledge and feelings developed through the everyday experience of being in physical space, contribute to one's sense of self. An attachment to a place and its subsequent sense of belonging, can construct meaning and "mediate change." To be separated from a sense of place identity whether because one has been removed from a space over time or because there has never been the availability to form an attachment, can lead to trauma.³⁶

When considering the history of museums and their curating space, it is logical to assume that one can form place identity within a museum or museum community. Communities might also experience trauma from a museum place especially around the long term impacts of colonization, so it was important to keep works like these in mind when crafting critical questions.

Literature on Dialogue

³⁵ hooks, bell. (1994). *Teaching to transgress: education as the practice of freedom*. New York: Routledge, 11.

³⁶ Dixon, John, and Kevin Durrheim. (2004). "Dislocating Identity: Desegregation and the Transformation of Place." *Journal of Environmental Psychology* 24(4) (December): 455-473.

Shien (1993) argues that,

...dialogue is a necessary condition for effective group action, because only with a period of dialogue is it possible to determine whether or not the communication that is going on is valid. If it is not valid, in the sense that different members are using words differently or have different mental models without realizing it, the possibilities of solving problems or making effective decisions are markedly reduced. Dialogue, then, is at the root of *all* effective group action.³⁷

I first experienced dialogue while taking Roxanne Kymaani's Cultural Mediation Course in the Summer of 2017 at Goucher College. This course deeply impacted the way I communicate today and much of the literature from that course was used to consider how questions should be created intentionally and in a way that would invite educators to go deeper into exploring their own identities.

As frequent mediators of information to the public, educators in museum settings can benefit, just as I have, from the skills that come with knowing dialogue. In *everything is workable*, Diane Musho Hamilton (2013) states, "There comes a moment in our development, perhaps born of... suffering, when we learn that we can step outside our echo's functioning and observe it at work...this is the beginning of 'waking up.'"³⁸ "Waking up" becomes a critical framework for what I hope educators can experience by engaging with this toolkit and what am I hopeful can be the additional result of workshopping it in the future. Understanding how to mediate and facilitate is a necessary skill set for any museum educator working with a range of identities and experiences. This literature also guided my own framing of questions in the toolkit. Asking questions that were not only answerable via, "yes" or "no" for instance was an important part of my practice when thinking of questions educators could engage with.

The Role of Identity in Museum [Public] Space

Public space has long contributed to segregation and separation. In the United States, the role of creating public space to favor members of privileged identity groups over oppressed groups continues to define housing accessibility, education, travel ability and social needs for people today. Public spaces of leisure, interest or learning like museums have contributed greatly to segregation, isolation, integration and identity in everyday life.

Museums are spaces which confront and display the lives and histories of people and other living beings. Works like *Preserving What Is Valued: Museums, Conservation, and First Nations*, by Indigenous Scholar Miriam Clavir (2002), provide a detailed account of the contributions Museums as institutions have made not only to the housing of cultural resources of communities of non-Western European Ancestry but the exclusionary practices put in place to prevent members of descendant communities from engaging with said items both in past and present.

Indigenous communities are not the only ones to have been treated unethically by museums. Historian Fath Davis Ruffins (1998) writes of the history of specifically Black museum spaces.

³⁷ Shein, Edgar, H. (1993). Dialogue, Culture, and Organizational Learning. 4-13. *Organizational Dynamics*, vol. 22, Summer 1993.

³⁸ Hamilton, Diane. (2013). *Everything is Workable: A Zen approach to conflict resolution*. Shambala Publications Inc. 128.

He asserts that the legacy of discrimination, segregation and institutionalized racism is visible in these museums being underfunded, in segregated locations, disrespected and excluded from larger conversations on diversity in museums. On the legacy of museums promoting one version of history, he writes:

We know the name of King, but we do not know the names of all the others who were murdered trying to vote in the South, or the millions of Native Americans who were killed for their lands, or the millions who were caught up in the bloody maw of the Third Reich. To remember them, all nations build memorials and sometimes even museums.³⁹

Communities which have been underserved and represented by the institution then often create their own spaces for historic and cultural display. After reading about “third space” in a class on Cultural Documentation at Goucher, I felt it needed to be included in this work. The concept of “third space” reached mainstream awareness in the 1990s when urban planners and architects discovered that the number of public spaces in which communities could come together were on the decline.

In recent years, museums have joined the conversation having realized that audiences are not only focused on educational experiences, but interested in social experiences, too. As a result, communities now perceive museum spaces as more than the museum itself, but as places to engage socially, emotionally, and intellectually. In the toolkit, I ask educators to consider their own museum as “third space” and how it can be created to be one.⁴⁰

Locating Myself in the Literature

A review of literature would not be complete without an examination of my own identities. I have many identities. Because work rooted in social justice and equity cannot be done, I feel, without knowing oneself, one’s social location and the access and limitations that accompany it, I cannot do this work without transparency of my own identity.

This work would not be successful or complete without deep, investigative reflection into my own identity. I am fortunate to have had access to many works of literature throughout my time in higher education and have sought such out due to personal interest. For the purpose of this project and the work I must continue to do with myself, I have chosen to name key works that impacted reflections on my own various identities. As someone with a lot of privilege it is important for me to always be reminding myself of where and how they manifest in my life and work.

Whiteness and Ancestry: While there are many resources on exploring whiteness, sources I first encountered as an undergraduate that I always come back to include: *Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack* by Peggy McIntosh (1998) for a reminder of whiteness and the privileges that I can choose to forget, and Roediger’s (2005). *Working toward whiteness: How America's immigrants became white: The strange journey from Ellis Island to the suburbs*, which resonates

³⁹ Fath Davis Ruffins; (1998). Culture Wars Won and Lost, Part II: The National African-American Museum Project. *Radical History Review* 1 January 1998; 1998 (70): 78–101. Accessed April 29, 2018. <https://doi.org/10.1215/01636545-1998-70-78>.

⁴⁰ David Bloom et al. “Foresight Research Report: Museums as Third Place,” (California Association of Museums, 2012), 8, http://art.ucsc.edu/sites/default/files/CAMLF_Third_Place_Baseline_Final.pdf. 8

with my own Irish ancestry. Understanding why and how my own ancestors gained access to the whiteness I now benefit from is necessary for engaging in empathy of other experiences. Other significant privileges I benefit from include:

Class: While my income fluctuates as it does when working in the non-profit world, I have been able to save money and even when living pay check to pay check, can feel certain that I will be able to pay my rent and afford food.

Education: I am formally educated. I have two Bachelor's Degrees and this work is for the completion of a Master's.

Passing Ability Privilege: Even when symptoms of my chronic pain and endometriosis manifest physically and make it difficult for me to have a full range of motion, I am usually able to continue to work and complete most daily tasks.

Non-Veteran Status: I have never been a member of any armed forces.

Body Type: I benefit from the privileges of being of a petite body type. My body type is considered ideal by Western white worldview standards. I never have difficulty finding clothing or being certain that I will be granted access into nightclubs, events, not have to pay double for an airplane seat and other benefits that come with being of a certain body type.

Age: I am an adult. While my opinion is not always taken seriously because I am still a young adult, I do not face the unfair treatment experienced by youth and elders.

To examine each of the additional privileges above, sources such as Ferber (2009) and Johnson (2006), are in-depth and inclusive anthologies of personal stories and essays addressing many privileges and their very real lived experience and impact.⁴¹

A study of privilege and oppression would not be complete without also taking into consideration where one does not benefit from social systems. When I find myself in need of affirmation around my queer and gender-non conforming identities, I often turn to online magazines and resources. Sites like: them⁴², this body is not an apology⁴³ and Everyday Feminism⁴⁴ are ones I visit again and again.

Creating a Toolkit

Guiding Questions

Guiding questions, I used in the toolkit were:

How can museum educators transform museum communities by knowing themselves, their privileges and non-privileges and their personal histories? How can educators learn deeply about their own identities? How can sharing stories of successes and selves make someone a better educator?

On page 8 of Part 1 of the toolkit I provide reasoning for educators about why each of these questions was chosen to guide this work. It is as follows:

⁴¹ Ferber (2009). Johnson (2006).

⁴² them. (2018). <https://www.them.us/>

⁴³ This Body is Not an Apology. (2018). <https://thebodyisnotanapology.com/>.

⁴⁴ Everyday Feminism: Intersectional Feminism for You Everyday Life. (2018). <https://everydayfeminism.com/>.

How can museum educators transform museum communities by knowing themselves, their privileges and non-privileges and their personal histories?

While the author of this toolkit may not see their sexual orientation or gender identity in museums, they do see their whiteness everywhere. It is necessary to critically examine and understand how these identities intersect and relate to privilege. Knowing ourselves opens space for educational practices that incorporate equity, advocacy and justice.

How can educators learn deeply about their own identities?

Exercises in this toolkit were designed using feedback from other museum educators and an exploration of personal story and identity. No matter where you are in your identity and museum journey's there is still learning to do and this is just one of many, many resources.

How can sharing stories of successes and selves make someone a better educator?

What can you share of yourself with your museum community? What unique skills do you bring to your museum? What do you love about it? Your story matters!

Educator Participation and the Toolkit: The final toolkit, while influenced by educator perspectives and insights on identity, does not directly quote educators in the final document. It is my hope that a future product will include direct quotes of educators interviewed. I am incredibly grateful to those who agreed to be interviewed as their perspectives and knowledge and desires were critical to the exercises, questions and resources used in the final documents.

Project Limitations: An immediate limitation of this project is that I am one person. I had originally planned on this work being more collaborative and in the future, I hope it will be.

Ethical Considerations: Ethical considerations in this project include my need to be aware of museum history and identities of which I am not a part of. As someone who has been a long time frequenter of and worker in museum spaces, I am aware that this already influences my perceptions of museums and identity in them. To uphold ethics in my research, therefore, I must be aware of my own biases. In order to authentically represent community experience of the educators interviewed for this project, it was necessary to understand that not everyone will have the same experience in their museum as I have and that I must be transparent about my positionality and own identities.

It must also be mentioned that while I have worked in each of the spaces represented via educator interviews, and have studied museum theory at the academic level, I am in no way authorized to speak with complete authority on the experience or personal identities of others. I am aware that when workshoping this toolkit in the future, I will learn and perhaps even be called out on aspects of the community I either have never been exposed to, or do not experience because of my own identities (experiences unexperienced because of whiteness for example).

Informed Consent: Each interview participant signed an informed consent as per the regulations outlined by the Goucher International Review Board (IRB).

Confidentiality: While my interview participants consented to the use of their first and last names, I realized that if I were to disclose names, the individuals I interviewed could be researched on the web and it could easily be found out where they work. The availability to do so, would have been in direct violation of our agreement not to disclose where anyone worked. Editors were therefore assigned the title, Educator A-D in order of interview date. The additional two are cited in “personal communication with author.”

Potential Risks and Benefits: After gaining approval to conduct interviews with educators from the IRB on March 7th, 2018, I sent a mass e-mail to a group of museum educators at museums all across my home state of Colorado. I also communicated on a closed Museum Educator Facebook group. My requirements for participation were a) individuals who had experience working in museum education b) were interested in and willing to speak about their personal identity and how it impacts their work. Each participant was given a review of the purpose of the study and a consent form to sign prior to their interview.

Interviews were conducted over Zoom, on the phone and using Facebook messenger. One was conducted in person. As was outlined by my confidentiality agreement with IRB and with participants only participant voices were recorder for the purpose of capturing interviews and providing transcripts for official purposes.

Questions and Interview Methodology: Prior to each interview I sent a list of questions that would potentially be asked by e-mail. Everyone is on their own journey and I wanted each participant to have the opportunity to reflect on where they are and what they think of their own identity prior to asking questions about such a personal and revealing topic. This made our interviews feel much more informal and I found that across the board I was able to dive into questions about identity and privilege and other deep topics from the very beginning. Questions sent to educations before the interviews took place were:

- What come up for you when you hear the word “identity”?
- What have been your personal experiences with your identity?
- Do you have an identity that is important to you? Can you share a story about who you are?
- What emotions are tied to your understanding and experiences with your identity?
- What do you do or engage in when not at your museum?
- How does it reflect your personal identity?
- Do you identify yourself by what you do?
- What is power and where does it come from?
- Do you and your audiences/visitors have different levels of power?
- What are some ways the power is held, controlled and exercised against you based on your identity?
- What are some ways you might hold, control and exercise power against your audiences/visitors?
- What is your experience with privilege and oppression?
- Can you identify privileges and non-privileges you experience? What are they and how do they manifest in your everyday and working experiences?

- Think of a time you were engaging with audience. To whom was your voice and its message directed at? Was it inclusive to guests of all backgrounds and abilities?
- Would you be interested in learning techniques for how to create inclusive voice?
- Have you heard decolonize? What does it mean to you?
- When engaging in a program, is there anything you look for or pay attention to decolonize?
- How might your own place of work decolonize?
- If you were given a toolkit with information about identity, what would you like to see?

While not all questions came up in every interview, they did become important to the final questions asked in exercises throughout the toolkit.

Design and Visual Inspiration: I am not a student of design or a visual artist. To create this toolkit, I used a free design software called Canva, one which provides an assortment of templates that can be filled in and adapted to meet the needs of your project. I choose a format called A4, one that provided space for paragraphs of text without, at least to my view, cluttering or oversaturating with information. An understanding realized during its creation is that it cannot be all encompassing and that if individuals are interested, they will need to do additional research and continued learning beyond what it offers. This is both an intentional part of my own education practice and a limitation of space and time. A future goal is to partner with an artist in the museum community and create a toolkit pdf that has been illustrated with museums in mind.

Challenges: Challenges that occurred during this project were primarily technical. It was through additional research and trial and error that I learned how to merge five pdfs into one. I interviewed a couple of my participants while we were each in different time zones. One call occurred when someone was walking home from work and due to background noise, while audible, the recording was not as clear for transcription purposes as I would have liked. An interview that was originally scheduled to take place over the phone ended up taking place via chat because I came down with a cold several days prior and didn't want coughing to cover the information on the recording.

Other challenges included Canva taking too long to load or being unable to download the toolkit and needing to be rebooted a number of times. If I am to make a toolkit of this size again, I might find another software more capable of supporting a large document. While I do love the design and usability, the page limitation of thirty pages on each design was at times, limiting.

Creating a Toolkit: Plans for Future Practice

This section of my paper presents an overview of the exhibit that inspired this work and a plan to workshop the Toolkit in the future.

In September of 2016, I visited the Swedish History Museum in Stockholm. There they have a project called, *Hidden Histories*. It is partnership with the Unstraight Museum, a museum in Stockholm dedicated to sharing non-normative perspectives. It was a Tuesday morning and the museum was quiet. As I made my way through exhibit space, I was the only guest present. I made my way through the silent galleries taking my time. To the right hand side of paintings and sculptures, I began to notice bright colored text panels. The contained personal accounts from

individuals who identify as being part of the LGBTQ+ community. I was deeply moved by the stories that had been shared and how the simple act of including these voices, which had not been included in exhibits on Swedish history prior, made me feel more connected to and included by the narrative of the museum.

The introduction to the exhibit itself reads,

Museum exhibitions often adopt the perspective of those who represent present or past social norms, which makes those who diverge from such norms invisible. If you don't know you have a history, it can be hard to believe you have a future. We invited members of the LGBTQ community to share their thoughts and reflections on some of the exhibits. Based on their commentaries, we have created a trail through the Swedish History, Medieval Massacre and Medieval Art exhibitions.⁴⁵

A couple of the panels that stood out to me included:

“Invisible

It took a long time for me to understand.

I didn't feel ill, just lost. Despite being labelled as mentally ill, I was never admitted to hospital. I didn't exist. Just as the non-existing Virgin Mary in the empty triptych. No-one came out in public. I found nothing of interest in youth magazines. I couldn't find any novels I could relate to. My sexuality was invisible.

By sheer good fortune, I had my first experience of love with a woman when I was over 20. But who wants to wait that long? When the label of mental illness was removed in 1979, I was declared healthy, having been “ill” for 34 years.”

Inger, 70, lesbian

Another reads: “What was it like to be Queer in the Middle Ages? I imagine a lot of prayer and suffering: God why did you make me this way?” Nikolai, 17, Transman⁴⁶

These were just two of the panels I captured a blurry picture of with my phone while making my way through the hushed exhibit. I was moved to tears by the stories, old and recent that shared a common theme: what does it look like when an identity that has been erased, is included? The answer to this question, I thought could be a way to not only combine disciplines about which I am passionate: identity, story and museums but to create something to bring communities together. This is at the heart of the work that is done in Cultural Sustainability and so for the sustainability of museum and communal identity, this project began.

Project Limitations and Opportunities for Future Growth

This toolkit, though influenced by years of personal interest and two years spent in Graduate school, was completed over the course of a semester. A semester is hardly enough time to begin to touch the surface of a community and what its identity can be defined as. Knowing this, it is my plan and hope to continue to do this work beyond my graduation date. A limitation of this

⁴⁵ Transcribed from photos taken by the author, September 2016.

⁴⁶ Transcribed from photos taken by the author, September 2016.

project is my singularity, both that I am one person and that I have one experience of museums and identity and can only speak from self. I am satisfied with the interviews I was able to conduct with educators, however, future development would hopefully result in many more perspectives. My project could also use feedback from someone versed in design and I will be seeking additional perspectives on the toolkit as a whole. Due to time, I was only able to show the toolkit to my Capstone committee and a couple of educators prior to its being submitted. While feedback was positive, I have looked at this work so many times, I can no longer say that I am the best judge of what looks *right*, as it all has begun to look similar to me. In each section of the toolkit, I will add more links to articles and other resources for educators to explore each topic and directly quote educator experience. Even as I complete this project for graduation, I continue to come back to it each day and make changes.

Opportunities for future growth are to include meetings with professionals in my field to gather insights and feedback and a workshop with educators where the toolkit can be assessed in its entirety for use ability and what is still needed. A Workshop Plan and Outline can be found in Appendix A. This workshop is to be used both as a tool for assessment of the toolkit and an opportunity to explore deeper and in physical space, what it means to bring identity in to museum work. Additional opportunities for growth include professional development for myself and how I plan to move forward. Revisiting dialogue techniques and practicing will help with the future delivery of this workshop. Attending online seminars and workshops myself on topics like decolonization, privilege and museums will be additionally important personally and professionally.

Inspired by the stories of my fellow educator and continually amazed by the brave, important work they do each day, I will also continue to engage with my museum families, current and previous in story, memory, why we love what we do and how we can move forward together.

Appendices

Appendix A – Potential Workshop Outline

A Museum Educator’s Identity Toolkit Workshop Curriculum

Cat Jensen, MA Candidate
Masters of Arts in Cultural Sustainability
Goucher College
July 9th, 2018

This Curriculum has been created to accompany *A Museum Educator’s Toolkit: How knowing ourselves transforms our work*, created in fulfillment of a Master’s Degree of Arts in Cultural Sustainability at Goucher College. Influenced and inspired by *Theater of the Oppressed*, immersive dialogue and critical race, gender and queer theory pedagogy, this curriculum seeks to explore identity as it presents itself on an individual, structural, institutional and non-profit industrial complex level. Through the inclusion of reading and video sources, interactive activities with fellow educators, exercises which engage educators in their museum space and critical conversations about the oppressive histories of museums and current day movements to address such, this curriculum seeks to provide space for educators to investigate and interrogate their pedagogical practices and move to shape them for an equitable future museum.

Objective: This three part, three-day workshop seeks to facilitate dialogue and experiential learning with museum educators. They have been specifically designed to address museum history, educator identity and the future of museums. This workshop will be used as a way to assess and test the toolkit created as part of this MA program in Cultural Sustainability.

Audience: “Educators,” is used in this context to describe anyone who interacts with the public in an informal education setting. This includes paid staff educators, gallery guides, docents, educational administrators and volunteers working in museums. A “museum” is defined as any space that interacts with the public and is intended to include spaces like parks, nature centers, botanical gardens, community centers and beyond. To begin, this workshop will be held with museum communities with whom I am already familiar, who are familiar with one another and who have already committed as a department, organization or small group to do this work.

Location: The preferred location is in the museum space. If necessary, Zoom and WizIQ are both easily accessible from online. They offer options for video, chatting and private chatting and the ability to share one’s screen to give a PowerPoint and many other teaching presentations. They also allow for anyone to join a module at any time and leave if necessary.

Time: Each section of the toolkit will be held in intervals of one to two hours over three days.

Cost: A subscription to Zoom is \$10 a month, WizIQ is \$20. Some museums I plan to work with have their own access to Zoom and may be able to offer the use of such in reciprocity. Materials needed such as large sticky notes for in person workshops, art supplies for a vision board activity and refreshments may need to be purchased. It will be considered foremost to see if materials can

be donated or supplied in reciprocity. If the workshop is held in person, travel costs will vary depending on location.

Educator Fees: In an attempt to keep socioeconomic sustainability in mind, I would, if just beginning cover the Zoom fee out of pocket and ask for a sliding scale donation.

Partnerships/co-facilitation: It is necessary to facilitate in partnership. Not only does this create a balance when examining deep questions but makes it possible for more than one person to be present to address an individual question away from the group if need be.

Facilitator Roles: The facilitators leading this workshop are responsible for introducing each days' objectives, establishing clear ground rules and agreements, keeping track of time, asking critical questions and guiding dialogue.

General Objectives:

- To provide an overview of identity.
- To get educators thinking, feeling, engaging in the how, what, when, where and why of their work.
- To help educators understand the relationship between identity and educator well-being and how it translates into confidence when on the floor, in a gallery or in a classroom.
- To connect educators of different identities together as a group to strengthen a collective department or group identity.
- To build commitment from educators to practicing an education model that embraces different ways of knowing, participates in upstanding and embraces decolonization.

Introduction Message for Educators: It is important for me to introduce an overview of this course and its intentions to educators prior to our meeting online or in person. An abbreviated version of the opening letter from the toolkit itself which is cited here, will be a framework for opening letters in the future. Letters will be personalized with details about a specific group and their unique needs.

Museum Family,

This toolkit was created by a museum educator who after seeing one of their rarely represented identities, present in a museum, began engaging with others about why identity and representation matter. They are not an expert of the following knowledge. You are an agent of your own learning and come to this space with your own important knowledge, experiences and talent.

You are encouraged, no matter where you are in your journey: to open your heart, do your own work, learn everything you can, appreciate the important gifts you offer and love your museum. This couldn't happen without you!

Let's move forward together.

Workshop Day 1: Toolkit Parts I and II

Toolkit Part I: Identity, an Introduction

Toolkit Part II: Identity, Story, Memory, and Learning

This module invites educators to explore their individual identities and learn about one another through an interactive workshop and dialogue. This module is available in a pre-recorded format where educators can log in, access the workshop and complete in their space without the physical presence of a facilitator, or an in person facilitation in the space.

Parts I and II of *A Museum Educator's Identity Toolkit* explore definitions of identity, invited educators to introduce themselves, and explores how story, memory and learning become part of the process and a tool for the work educators do.

Pre-registration: This pre-registration survey gives the facilitators insight into where educators are at in their journey's learning about themselves and how their various identities are influenced by systems of privilege and oppression. Pre-registration surveys can be created via Survey Monkey for free. The facilitator will have access to the results and be able to gather information via individual answer, as well as in a chart or graph format. Participants will answer the following questions when they register:

- What comes up for you when you hear the word “identity”?
- What have been your personal experiences with your identity?
- What is an identity that is important to you? Can you share a story about who you are?
- What emotions are tied to your understanding and experiences with your identity?
- Tell a story of the first time you visited a museum.
- How did this experience influence what you do at your museum today?
- Do you identify yourself by what you do?
- What is your learning style?
- What is pedagogy? Do you have your own pedagogy?
- How do you learn best? Select all that apply: lecture, images, reading, vocalizing what I have learned, engaging in small group conversation, movement around a space and with others, videos.

Level of Knowledge: Educators already come equipped with some knowledge of their own identity, their privileges and ways that they manifest and their museum space. Readings and videos directly from the toolkit as well as additional resources will be available 3-5 months in advance. While a part of the workshop is to review privilege and connect with those on our staff who do not have the same experience, the focus of this workshop is to engage in a critical and action oriented experience that will lead to immediate change. Educators are expected to come ready to get to work.

- Learning Outcome 1: What is identity? Educators will engage in exploring definitions and their meanings for themselves and in society at large.
- Learning Outcome 2: What are your identities? Educators will list, draw, act out, or reveal in other ways what identity means for them.

- Learning Outcome 3: What is learning? Educators will explore their own learning styles and consider how these can inform their pedagogy.

Workshop Day 2: Toolkit Parts III and IV

Toolkit Part III: Identity and Society

Toolkit Part IV: Identity, Privilege and Oppression

Parts III and IV of the toolkit explore systems within society and how privilege and oppression are created both inside the museum and out. Educators will engage in exercises, storytelling and deep self-reflection to critique and understand how these systems are a part of their lived experience.

Pre-registration: This pre-registration survey gives the facilitators insight into where educators are at in their journey's learning about themselves and how their various identities are influenced by systems of privilege and oppression. Pre-registration surveys can be created via Survey Monkey for free. The facilitators will have access to the results and be able to gather information via individual answer, as well as in a chart or graph format. Participants will answer the following questions when they register:

- What is your experience with privilege?
- Can you name an identity that privileges you and one that does not?
- What is power and where does it come from?
- Do you and your audiences/visitors have different levels of power?
- What are some ways the power is held, controlled and exercised against you based on your identity?
- What are some ways you might hold, control and exercise power against your audiences/visitors?
- Are you familiar with the words, racism and "color-blind" racism?
- Do you know that history of your museum and its participation in historic racism?
- Think of a time you were engaging with audience. To whom was your voice and its message directed at? Was it inclusive to guests of all backgrounds and abilities?
- Would you be interested in learning techniques for how to create inclusive voice?
- Have you heard the term, "decolonize"? What does it mean to you?

Level of Knowledge: Educators already come equipped with some knowledge of their own identity, their privileges and ways that they manifest and their museum space. Readings and videos directly from the toolkit as well as additional resources will be available 3-5 months in advance. While a part of the workshop is to review privilege and connect with those on our staff who do not have the same experience, the focus of this workshop is to engage in a critical and action oriented experience that will lead to immediate change. Educators are expected to come ready to get to work.

- Learning Outcome 1: How does society impact identity? Educators will engage in exercises with themselves and each other and critically examine structures in society that influence identity.
- Learning Outcome 2: What is privilege and oppression? Educators will explore their own identities as they relate to systems of privilege and oppression and make connections to their own museum.
- Learning Outcome 3: What is power? Educators will explore the systems of colonialism, racism and white supremacy in relation to themselves and their museum and begin to consider how to undo them.

Workshop Day 3: Toolkit Part V

Toolkit Part V: Identity, Your Museum and You

Part V of the Toolkit explores the meaning of space. It invites educators to come together and get to know on a social, emotional and physical level what their space means to them and their museum community. It asks educators to envision their museum's future and to plan action steps for transformation.

Pre-registration: This pre-registration survey gives the facilitators insight into where educators are at in their journey's learning about themselves and how their various identities are influenced by systems of privilege and oppression. Pre-registration surveys can be created via Survey Monkey for free. The facilitators will have access to the results and be able to gather information via individual answer, as well as in a chart or graph format. Participants will answer the following questions when they register:

- What is the meaning of "space"?
- Is there a space that you love in your museum? Why?
- Where do you do in your space to reflect and deeply engage with yourself?
- How or when do you feel like yourself in your museum space?
- Why is it important for people to have space to be themselves?
- How does your museum offer this to its community?

Level of Knowledge: Educators already come equipped with some knowledge of their own identity, their privileges and ways that they manifest and their museum space. Readings and videos directly from the toolkit as well as additional resources will be available 3-5 months in advance. While a part of the workshop is to review privilege and connect with those on our staff who do not have the same experience, the focus of this workshop is to engage in a critical and action oriented experience that will lead to immediate change. Educators are expected to come ready to get to work.

- Learning Outcome 1: How does space become a part of identity? Educators will investigate the meaning of space and when it is important to them.
- Learning Outcome 2: How can educators ignite their purpose in their museum? Educators will explore the meaning and possibilities of *discovery, dream, design and destiny* for themselves and their museum.

- Learning Outcome 3: What actions can we take to transform our space? Educators will plan action steps for themselves, their team and their community at large.

At Registration (If Online): When it is time for the webinar that educators have signed up for to begin, they will be sent a link via e-mail. When they click on a link sent by either platform, they will be admitted into the classroom. From there, they will be able to select to turn their camera on or keep it off, turn their mic on or keep it muted and be able to use the chat feature to communicate. All preferred means of communication and anonymity will be respected. Facilitators will meet with those organizing the viewing of the workshop prior and walk through setting the space.

Setting the Space (In Person): Setting the space is critical to the success and outcomes of a workshop or dialogue. Setting the space includes ensuring the room or area for facilitation is accessible and inviting, childcare is available, food and water for breaks are provided and participants feel welcome. Facilitators will have spent as long as possible (see timeline below) getting to know the museum space they will be working in. This process will include shadowing educators as they go throughout their day and taking notes on the space, who is present and where identities are visible or absent. Establishing a rapport with educators, their museum and the work they do prior to the workshop will strengthen the work being done.

Workshop Implementation Potential Timeline

- 6 months prior to the start of the workshop: My co-facilitator and I meet with a potential educator group and conduct a field visit to get a sense of space and the work being done there. If in person is not possible, online means of research will be utilized potentially including a virtual tour and pre-workshop conversations with educators in their space.
- 3-5 months prior to the start of the workshop: Participants are provided with access to the online information including a list of resources to introduce the topics that we will dive deeper into during the workshop(s). Participants are invited to join a closed Facebook group for their workshop where they can communicate with their peers and myself about readings, questions and concerns. Pre-workshop reading and learning will come directly from the toolkit and will be available to read and watch online at this time.
- 3-5 months prior to the start of the workshop: Having engaged in some introductory resources, educators will complete a questionnaire answering questions about who they are and what identities they have.
- 3-4 weeks prior to the workshop: Participants are reminded of the time and date and location of workshop and sent all the links and instruction necessary to join. If the workshop is happening long distance, this will include links to Zoom or whichever platform will be used.
- At the workshop: Participants are greeted, technology is tested, ground rules are established and the work begins.

Identity and Museum Education
Workshop Facilitation Outline

Day 1
Identity, An Introduction, large group

Welcome and Workshop Goals		15 min
Materials	Key Components	
Power point and Toolkit Copy Agenda Large paper for notes in person or note section online	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ PowerPoint Slides 1-3: Welcome, Opening Letter, A Toolkit Overview ▪ Distribute/look over agenda ▪ Share facility resources (restroom, break room, etc.) or establish that folks get up when needed if online. ▪ Introduce participants and facilitators ▪ Clearly communicate goals for the day 	
Guiding Questions		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>What is Identity?</i> ▪ <i>How can we learn about ourselves?</i> ▪ <i>How can sharing ourselves bring us closer together?</i> 		

Ground Rules and Agreements		10 min
Materials	Key Components	
PowerPoint Paper online or large sticky for writing and posting ground rules and agreements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ PowerPoint Slides 5-6 ▪ Ground rules and agreements for the day ▪ To be done with large group 	
Guiding Questions		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>How will we treat ourselves and one another throughout this process?</i> ▪ <i>What are our agreements? (step up, step back, brave space etc. Ground rules likely to vary based on group and specific needs) and how will we hold ourselves accountable?</i> 		

Workshopping the Toolkit Part I		2 hours
Materials	Key Components	
PowerPoint, Toolkit Copy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ PowerPoint Slides (toolkit part I) ▪ Have Toolkit open in presentation or check to see that screen share is on so the toolkit can be viewed online. 	

Participant Identity Toolkit on PowerPoint or online in shared screen mode	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitators share themselves and examples as they move from table to table throughout the day. Educators work in small groups at tables if in person and if online in partner pairs to share in activities and stories.
Guiding Questions	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>What can we learn about the meaning of identity?</i> <i>Who am I? Who are we in community?</i> 	

Break for food, water, focus: 20 min

Workshopping Toolkit Part II		2 hours
Materials	Key Components	
PowerPoint, Toolkit Copy Participant Identity Toolkit on PowerPoint or online in shared screen mode	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PowerPoint Slides (toolkit part II) Have Toolkit open in presentation or check to see that screen share is on so the toolkit can be viewed online. Facilitators share themselves and examples as they move from table to table if in person and if online, at specific times in the presentation. Educators work in small groups at tables if in person and if online in partner pairs to share in activities and stories. 	
Guiding Questions		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Is everyone's story being heard?</i> <i>What are some common themes coming up in our stories?</i> <i>Do we as a group experience any collective memory?</i> <i>What can we do to enhance our individual and collective ways of knowing?</i> 		

Break for food, water, focus: 20 min

Bringing it All Together: Large Group Setting

Day 1 Debrief		45 min
Materials	Key Components	
Debrief large sticky or shared screen Breathing and centering exercise instructions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Summarize progress from Day 1 Ask participants to share challenges encountered. Ask participants to share what they learned about themselves. Participate in a breathing and centering exercise to bring us back to space and leaving in gratitude. Preview Day 2 	
Guiding Questions		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>How will challenges be heard and addressed?</i> 		

- *How will learning and self be celebrated?*
- *What will be done is someone does not leave feeling completely centered, how can they be supported?*

Day 2

Welcome to Day 2: Large Group Setting

Day 2 Welcome		15 min
Materials	Key Components	
PowerPoint, Toolkit Copy Participant Identity Toolkit on PowerPoint or online in shared screen mode Ground rules and agreements sheet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Introduce Day 2 ▪ Review Ground rules and agreements. ▪ Set expectations for the day. ▪ Clarify transition: Yesterday was focused on [themes] tasks. Today is focused on [days themes] new tasks. *themes may vary by group based on group needs or progress 	
Guiding Questions		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>How will we review Day 1?</i> ▪ <i>What logistics need to be addressed for Day 2?</i> ▪ <i>Based on Day 1 progress, what can we realistically accomplish in Day 2?</i> 		

Small Group Setting

Workshopping Toolkit Part III		2 hours
Materials	Key Components	
PowerPoint Slides (toolkit part III) Have Toolkit open in presentation or check to see that screen share is on so the toolkit can be viewed online	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Facilitators share themselves and examples as they move from table to table if in person and if online, at specific times in the presentation. ▪ Educators work in small groups at tables if in person and if online in partner pairs to share in activities and stories. ▪ Educators are ensured to sit with someone different than that day before. 	
Guiding Questions		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>How can educators connect their identities to larger systems in society?</i> ▪ <i>Are people sharing themselves and holding space for the sharing of others?</i> 		

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Break for food, water, focus: 20 min

Small Group Setting

Workshopping Toolkit Part IV		2 hours
Materials	Key Components	
<p>PowerPoint Slides (toolkit part IV)</p> <p>Have Toolkit open in presentation or check to see that screen share is on so the toolkit can be viewed online</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Facilitators share themselves and examples as they move from table to table if in person and if online, at specific times in the presentation. ▪ Educators work in small groups at tables if in person and if online in partner pairs to share in activities and stories. ▪ Educators are ensured to sit with someone different than that day before. 	
Guiding Questions		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>How are people feeling? Are any tensions coming up?</i> ▪ <i>How are educators being encouraged to feel what they feel and come back to the group and the work at hand?</i> ▪ <i>Are moments of learning being celebrated?</i> ▪ <i>How are difficult conversations being supported and or mediated?</i> ▪ <i>Who is speaking? Are people holding space for others?</i> ▪ <i>What does active listening look and feel like? It is present?</i> 		

Break for food, water, focus: 20 min

Large group and then small group for vision boards

Day 2 Debrief		30 min
Materials	Key Components	
<p>Debrief large sticky or shared screen</p> <p>Breathing and centering exercise instructions</p> <p>Posters and magazines, glue sticks, markers for vision boards</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Summarize progress from day 2 ▪ Ask participants to share challenges encountered. ▪ Ask participants to share what they learned about themselves. ▪ Participate in a breathing and centering exercise to bring us back to space and leaving in gratitude. ▪ Preview Day 3 	

Guiding Questions	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>How will challenges be heard and addressed?</i> ▪ <i>How will learning and self be celebrated?</i> ▪ <i>What will be done is someone does not leave feeling completely centered, how can they be supported?</i> 	
Next Steps and Appreciation: 30 min	<p>In small groups educators will work together to create a list a vision board of what they appreciate and next steps. They will include images related to their own identities and their space. Small groups will share out their boards to large groups.</p>
Guiding Questions	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>What common themes are emerging in our visions?</i> ▪ <i>How will facilitators share in this experience?</i> 	

Day 3

Welcome to Day 3: Large Group Setting

Day 3 Welcome		15 min
Materials	Key Components	
<p>PowerPoint, Toolkit Copy</p> <p>Participant Identity Toolkit on PowerPoint or online in shared screen mode</p> <p>Ground rules and agreements sheet</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Review Day 2 ▪ Review Ground rules and agreements ▪ Set expectations for Day 3 ▪ Clarify transition: Yesterday was focused on [themes] tasks. Today is focused on [days themes] new tasks. *themes may vary by group based on group needs or progress 	
Guiding Questions		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>How will we review Day 2?</i> ▪ <i>What logistics need to be addressed for Day 3?</i> ▪ <i>Based on Day 1 progress, what can we realistically accomplish in Day 3?</i> 		

Small Group Setting

Workshopping Toolkit Part V		2 hours
Materials	Key Components	

PowerPoint, Toolkit Copy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Facilitators share themselves and examples as they move from table to table if in person and if online, at specific times in the presentation. ▪ Educators work in small groups at tables if in person and if online in partner pairs to share in activities and stories. ▪ Educators are ensured to sit with someone different than that day before.
Participant Identity Toolkit on PowerPoint or online in shared screen mode	
Guiding Questions	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>How are educators connecting with one another? How has the communal identity shifted or changed?</i> ▪ <i>What common themes are emerging about this museum community?</i> 	

Discovery, Dream, Design Destiny		30 min
Materials	Key Components	
PowerPoint with discovery, dream, design, destiny posted visibly Large sticky notes for around the room where educators will record future action plans, and fill in discovery, dream, design, destiny	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Educators will explore the definitions and possibilities of: discovery, dream, design, destiny. ▪ After filling out each category for themselves in small groups, Educators will fill in large sticky notes around the room with what each could mean for their museum. 	
Guiding Questions		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Are all educators participating in the exercise?</i> ▪ <i>What does the energy feel like, is there anything that needs to be addressed?</i> ▪ <i>How are educators sharing themselves and their hopes for the future of their space?</i> 		

Debrief		30 min
Materials	Key Components	
Debrief large sticky or shared screen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Educators will come back together with a breathing and centering exercise. ▪ Educators will speak to what they are grateful for and what they have learned in a large around the room fashion. 	

Breathing and centering exercise instructions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Educators will be thanked and honored for all their hard work and reminded to fill out an assessment which will be sent out after the workshop.
Guiding Questions	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>How are educators and their work being celebrated?</i> ▪ <i>Is there anything that needs to be addressed so they group can move into their transformation?</i> ▪ <i>What common themes are emerging in our gratitude and learning?</i> ▪ <i>How can we support one another going forward?</i> 	

Workshop Assessment and Follow Up

At the end of the workshop whether online or in-person, educators will be reminded of a link that will be sent their registration email containing a follow up assessment. They will be asked to complete it within a week from the final day of their workshop, allowing for processing time and deep thinking. The assessment will likely be created in survey monkey. It is free, easy to use and provides the survey creator with a way to map the data afterwards into charts and categories. This will provide a visual and quantitative means by which to judge the Toolkit's usability. The assessment will look for:

- What works really well in the toolkit/workshop
- What could be improved upon, why and how
- Where something is missing from the toolkit/workshop
- Suggestions for what could be better
- A space where educators can explain what they can contribute to the future of this work. Does someone have a really great story about their identity? Can someone provide bi or multi-lingual information? Does someone know of another exercise that has helped them in that learning that other educators can benefit from?

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Appendix C – Index to Media

The Museum Educator’s Identity Toolkit Media Logs

Researcher: Cat Jensen

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Contents

Audio Logs

A. Interview with Educator A (2018-04-30)

B. Interview with Educator B (2018-05-16)

C. Interview with Educator C (2018-05-25)

D. Interview with Educator D (2018-05-29)

Key Words: museums, identity, space, privilege, oppression, story, memory

Audio Log A

Researcher: Cat Jensen

Project Name: A Museum Educator's Identity Toolkit

Date Logged: 2018_May_12

File Name: 2018.MET.CEJ.A01.mp3

File 1 of 4

Format:

Digital file type: BWF WAV MP3 Other:

Length of recording: Hour(s): 0 Minutes: 32 Seconds: 15

Date Recorded (2018-04-30)

Location: Via Zoom

Interviewee/Event: Interview with Museum Educator on identity and museum work

Interviewer(s): Cat Jensen

Subject: museum, identity, race, gender, privilege, education

Copyright Owner: Cat Jensen

Restricted? No

Summary: A long time museum educator, Educator A, speaks about being a woman in STEM and how privileged identities like whiteness impact how they relate to guests and students.

Key words, names, & places: museum, identity, educator, privilege, oppression, science

Audio Log A

00:00:00 Project Introduction and Background
00:01:10 Identity Construction
00:02:31 Defining Informal Education
00:04:14 Being a Women in STEM and Perceptions
00:08:60 Handling Weird Guest Interactions
00:10:40 Whiteness in Museums
00:18:10 First Museum Memory
00:21:55 Resources for Toolkit
00:32:15 Interview Ends

Audio Log (Page 2 of 4)

Audio Log B

Researcher: Cat Jensen

Project Name: A Museum Educator's Identity Toolkit

Date Logged: 2018_May_16

File Name: 2018.MET.CEJ.A01.mp3

File 2 of 4

Format:

Digital file type: BWF WAV MP3 Other:

Length of recording: Hour(s): 0 Minutes: 38 Seconds: 58

Date Recorded (2018-05-16)

Location: Via Phone

Interviewee/Event: Interview with Museum Educator on identity and museum work

Interviewer(s): Cat Jensen

Subject: museum, identity, race, gender, privilege, education

Copyright Owner: Cat Jensen

Restricted? No

Summary: A science museum educator, Educator B, speaks about embracing a new identity as a scientist and negotiating when to address biases that come up at work in the museum world.

Key words, names, & places: museum, identity, educator, privilege, oppression, science

Audio Log B

00:00:00 Introduction and Project Background
00:03:20 Engaging with the Public
Learning how to be a Scientist
00:06:30 Early Identity
Adapting to Public School Culture Shock
00:08:11 Latino and Feminist Family
00:11:32 Inquiry Based Learning and Identity
00:12:00 Addressing Hard Content
00:17:12 Systems that Construct Identity
00:18:51 Educator Vs Audience Power
00:20:91 Educator Vs Audience Power Examples
00:25:10 Feeling Ashamed of Inaction
00:32: 12 Addressing Inaction
00: 38: 58 Interview Ends

Audio Log (Page 3 of 4)

Audio Log C

Researcher: Cat Jensen

Project Name: A Museum Educator's Identity Toolkit

Date Logged: 2018_May_30

File Name: 2018.MET.CEJ.A01.mp3

File 3 of 4

Format:

Digital file type: BWF WAV MP3 Other:

Length of recording: Hour(s): 0 Minutes: 26 Seconds: 04

Date Recorded (2018-05-25)

Location: Via Phone

Interviewee/Event: Interview with Museum Educator on identity and museum work

Interviewer(s): Cat Jensen

Subject: museum, identity, race, whiteness

Copyright Owner: Cat Jensen

Restricted? No

Summary: An educator at a historic site speaks of the unique challenges they face when doing work with the public and examines the role of whiteness in museum work.

Key words, names, & places: museum, identity, whiteness, queer, history, historic site

Audio Log C

00:00:00 Project Introduction and Background
00:03:01 Identity as a Queer Woman
00:05:21 A Volunteer Event with Missing Identities
00:05:55 A Rant about Race in Museums
00:07:57 Educator Journey
00:10:29 Educator Identity
00:13:25 Non-white history Education and Decolonization
00:17:31 Work with Native Communities
00:21:29 Historic Site Challenges
00:26:04 Educator Gets Back to Work
00:26:04 Interview Ends

Audio Log (Page 4 of 4)

Audio Log D

Researcher: Cat Jensen

Project Name: A Museum Educator's Identity Toolkit

Date Logged: 2018_June_28

File Name: 2018.MET.CEJ.A01.mp3

File 4 of 4

Format:

Digital file type: BWF WAV MP3 Other:

Length of recording: Hour(s): 0 Minutes: 50 Seconds: 03

Date Recorded (2018-05-29)

Location: In person, Confidentiality Agreement

Interviewee/Event: Interview with Museum Educator on identity and museum work

Interviewer(s): Cat Jensen

Subject: museum, identity, race, gender, privilege, education, career

Copyright Owner: Cat Jensen

Restricted? No

Summary: A gallery educator, Educator D, speaks about switching careers to enter the museum field, the impacts of their biracial identity on interactions with guests and working in empathy.

Key words, names, & places: museum, identity, educator, biracial, career, empathy

Audio Log D

00:00:00 Project Introduction and Background
00:03:40 From Tech to Museums
00:03:58 Working with the Public in a Museum
00:05:42 Relating to Museum Demographics
00:09:27 Putting on a Persona
00:12:07 Choosing some identities over Others
00:14:13 Betraying Identity
00:19:38 Making Face Judgements about guests
00:23:53 Decompressing from Microaggressions
00:25:50 Resources for toolkit
00:29:21 Empathy for Other Identities
00:34:48 Asking Questions
00:38:16 Personal, Multiracial identities
00:47:09 Educator Journey and Identity in Museums
00: 50: 03 Interview Ends

Appendix E:
Selected Transcripts

Project: A Museum Educator's Identity Toolkit

Media Name/Type: 2018.MET.CEJ.A01.mp3

Researcher: Cat Jensen

Date Recorded: 4/30/18

Interviewee (s): Educator A (EA), Confidentiality Agreement

Location: Via Zoom

Subject: Educator Identity in a Museum Space

Key Words: Museum, Identity, Education

00:00:00 Introduction/Project Background

...

CJ: What does identity mean to you?

EA: The dictionary definition when I think of identity I think of a series of traits and those can be things like race and ethnicity they can be gender, sexual orientation, it can be your occupation, it can be your geographical origin, like all of these different potential traits that you use to sort of find who you are and how you interact with the world and how the world interacts with you.

01:10:00

EA: I think identity can be constructed from a lot from a lot of different potential traits and I know my identity...I identify as female, I'm cisgender so I identify with being feminine in a lot of ways. I identify as being from the Western United States specifically.

01:44:00

EA: I feel really connected to the ecosystems and the geography of the Western U.S and that's a part of who I am. And I identify by my education, you know, I identify myself very much as an educator and a scientist, I think of myself specifically as an informal museum, woman, educator and I think of myself in STEM so a lot of the different aspects of my identity also intersect a lot and sort of create this whole different, complex level.

--

You know it's possible for a person to have a certain racial or ethnic identity and also a gender identity and then those two things the way they interact with each other can produce a whole different level of identity.

02:31:00

CJ: Talk more about what it means to be an informal educator.

EA: Yeah, so when I think of informal education, I think just basically of education that doesn't occur in a school. When I think of formal education I think of the education that happens in a classroom, in a school, in a college environment and is something that is set up specifically for a certain type of education.

02:59:00

EA: Informal education to me is things that happen at museums, zoos, nature centers, aquariums, environmental education programs, outdoors where there isn't quite the same level of rigid structure...we have standards we need to fall within but there is a little more freedom. If a kid is really excited about one particular thing that is not related to what we are supposed to be talking about, I feel like I have freedom to say, "well let's talk about that, cause that's awesome and you are clearly excited about that!" I think that's the big dividing line: different setting and then different goals.

04:14:00

CJ: You mentioned being in STEM, particularly being a woman in STEM. If you were explaining to someone who doesn't have that identity experience, what it means, what would you tell them?

EA: This is another example of identities intersecting...I think I experience being in a science field differently than a male person because there are a whole range of expectations of me as a woman in a STEM field and there are a whole bunch of standards I feel like I have to live up to that men in my field don't necessarily have to. I am perceived automatically because I am female a little bit differently than a male person would be perceived.

--

EA: I know I've had experiences before where someone has approached me, like a guest at the museum has approached me and I've just been doing my job on the floor at a community fair or in a gallery...and people have interacted with me in ways I know they would not have interacted with me if I were a man...I feel like I have to work twice as hard for half as much gain and I think a lot of women in this field would also explain that the same way. I know that I've commiserated with a lot of people about, like when people automatically assume that I'm feminine and I'm young that I must not actually know what I'm talking about and that couldn't be further from the truth.

05:58:00

CJ: Can you give an example?

EA: Yeah, once I was in a [gallery] washing things, doing usual floor cleaning things and an older male guest came up to me...and he goes, "wow, can you just, it is so amazing to imagine, you went to school your whole life just to be a laundress." And I almost lost it, I came so close to being like, "Okay, you need to shut up."

[Laughter]

06:30:00

EA: But I looked at him and I was like, “Oh, no this is part of the usual day, everybody who works here has a lot of different jobs that we do and some of them do involve doing scienc-y things and some of them do involve cleaning up messes and making sure that the exhibit has what it needs to run” and I said, “I actually have a bachelors in Neurobiology and have my name put on a couple of paper’s and am working on a Master’s Degree in Conservation Biology,” like I basically felt like I had to defend my being smart, my being there, I had to then look at him and say, no no I didn’t just go to school my whole to do this, I do a whole lot of other things and by the way I am incredibly qualified to be. And that just, I can’t imagine anyone approaching one of the male educators that kind of comment...maybe if they were going to say something snarky their comment would be different.

08:60:00

EA: ...and then once I said that he was like, “Oh, well have you read this paper by so-and-so,” like it wasn’t enough to just take me at my word he had to test me, he then had to be like, well let’s see if you really are smart enough to be here. And I just feel like that doesn’t happen to men in the same setting.

CJ: Would you say experience like that one, have an impact on the way you are in your educating space? How you interact with guests for instance?

EA: I think, yes and no. I’ve been in this field long enough that we’ve all had weird interactions with guests and you know that at a certain point you just have to let it roll of you and say, fine, that was weird but that’s not the majority of interactions that we have with guests. Most interactions are very positive and very exciting and I find my job really rewarding so I’m able to sort of let those instances and go and move past them. But then at the same time, I’m also now really conscious of the way I might be perceived and other aspects of my identity influence my...I’m more aware of how others might perceive me like if I see someone approaching me, like that guy was an older, white, male who just came up to me to make a snarky comment and I know that in time’s following that I’ve been approached by other white males and been like, “Okay, God what is this guy going to say to me?” So I know that that has happened before and it encourages me to have my shields up and be ready to deflect...

CJ: Mhm.

EA: So in some ways it has influenced the way I perceive guests and instances like that have forced me to put up a shield or project a certain mood or persona in response to that.

CJ: That’s a good example of someone with a different privileged identity having some sort of power over you. Can you speak to your privileges and when you have that kind of power over guests?

00:10:40

EA: Yeah, I think I have an enormous amount of privilege. If I were to list all the privileges I do have it would be much easier actually to list, the ones I don't have. I am not male and I am not wealthy. But pretty much everything else I've got. I'm white, I'm cisgender, I'm heterosexual... I'm an incredibly privileged person. In particular, my whiteness is what gives me a huge, huge amount of power over a lot of my audiences. You know, museums as a space are almost always white. I love museums, I love going to them, I visit them when I travel, I feel really comfortable in them, they are my place. A part of that is because I can be certain that anytime I walk into a museum, no matter where it is that I'm going to be able to walk in and see someone who looks exactly like me within minutes. That's going to be someone at the front area taking tickets, that's going to be someone on security, education staff and people in leadership and I can't help but notice some of these things when I walk around in a museum, especially how many general visitors walking around on the floor are white. That's where a lot of my power is, that I'm white and I don't have the risk of walking into a space and having to think, "Oh, am I supposed to be here, is my being here going to make anyone feel like I'm out of place?" I can't tell you how many times I've gone to hang out in a Starbucks and not ordered anything for many minutes and the cops have never been called on me. No one ever looks at me and thinks, I don't know if she's really supposed to be here.

CJ: Right, our whiteness is always at the forefront. How does this show up in education settings?

EA: In the education setting I do outreach and so I travel to schools and a lot of the schools that we partner with do have a large Latino audience so I'm in the classroom a lot of times with a lot of Latino students and I've noticed ways that my whiteness has created power there. We have a program that focuses on healthy and healthy food and we partner with low-income schools, a lot of free and reduced lunch and it makes me uncomfortable because one, I'm a white person in a classroom of almost all students of color saying, this is what you should do and throughout history and throughout time there have been so many instances of white people defining, "this is the right thing that you should be doing, I'm going to set the standard for how you should be living and if you don't meet that then you're wrong" not taking into account other cultural values and traditions and historical knowledge that's been passed down to families and so when I go into that classroom and I say, you should be eating this, this, this, this, I'm discounting the fact that communities have different ways of thinking about food and as a white person going in there I feel like I'm saying, all the cultural ideas and knowledge you have about food is wrong and so I think that is part of it too. White people are in power and used to setting the standard.

00:17:01

CJ: White people are often seen as the "experts" especially in educational settings. In terms of your own educational space, do you think it's a place where that can begin to be deconstructed and addressed?

EA: I think potentially. I think we've been trying and I don't know how successful we've been but we have begun asking how can we make our programming more diverse because our staff is mostly white which doesn't match our city community. I know there have been some efforts to

really listen to what people want to say...but then at the same time are we discounting the fact that these people have been here all along? So I guess, I don't know, it's hard! It's so difficult when these systems of power have been in place for so long. I feel like because our city is becoming more diverse, our Latino population is growing a lot and our Black population has always been here and so we could be doing more about going to communities and saying, "tell us where we should go and what you want to see."

00:18:10

CJ: Do you have a memory of the first time you visited a museum or a story about it?

EA: Yeah, my first memory actually takes place [in this museum]! I grew up [here] and have a lot of museum and zoo memories. One of my first is my preschool class coming here and I was a dinosaur kid I was one of those kids who could name every dinosaur and if someone pronounced something wrong I would correct them and I was so excited to come to the museum because I knew there would be dinosaurs so my first memory is, you know how [this exhibit] has that second floor where you walk through and see the dinosaur down below?

CJ: Yeah

EA: So my memory is coming around the bend and seeing the dinosaur skeleton and just feeling a shiver and just being like, (gasp)! Cause that was the first time I had ever seen a dinosaur skeleton. I had seen pictures in books and watched all the dinosaur movies but this was the first time seeing one in person so that was a huge moment for me. One of the reasons I love museum education is because we have the power to create moments like that. I remember that more than twenty years later, I remember it exactly.

00:20:55

CJ: Did you ever expect that you would one day work in a museum?

EA: I've been here a long time. I started volunteering as a teenager so I guess it was actually more of my mom's choice. She recognized that I was a bored teenager and was like, you're going to go volunteer at the the museum. She also knew that I loved science so she marched me down to my interview. Once I was here I loved it so went from volunteering to an internship helping with summer camps. When I started college I was teaching programs on the weekend and working summer camps in the summer and when I graduated college is started becoming year round. So I think initially I didn't expect that I would be working in a museum but once I got here I was like, these are my people and this is my place.

[Laughter]

EA: And I think a lot of us have this experience where we are like, museums that's where I want to be! I want to be in informal Ed and I feel like a lot of us are called to this profession. You know, we don't do it for the money for sure.

[Laughter]

00:21:55

CJ: If you were to have a toolkit of resources about identity and how these intersections impact your work, what would you want to see?

EA: Deconstructing privilege, I think starts with understanding privilege. I remember doing an activity in undergrad, maybe you've done something similar, where we all got a pile of paperclips and we were supposed to add a paperclip to our chain for every privilege that we have and they read a series of situations which were things like, if you were to end up in financial trouble could your family bail you out, add a paperclip...and it was a pretty powerful experience. I went to a university with a lot of very wealthy white people who...I can't tell you how many times I heard the phrase, reverse racism when I was in the classroom there so I think that was a very important exercise for a lot of people to be like, look at long your chain is, do you understand that so many people don't have these links in their chain?

00:25:27

Tools that answer the question: *I don't know how*

Some of the things I've found really powerful when having conversations with people who are white is bringing up examples like the study done a few years ago where resumes with white sounding names got more calls back.

I would want real stories of the ways people's identities have been used against them.

...

I also think people withdraw when there is a language barrier so I don't know if you were there or remember when we did a sheltered English training but that was super helpful because there are times when a guest, a lot of times I see this with chaperones, where they are uncomfortable because they don't speak much English and I don't speak Spanish and when I can't communicate beyond saying hello, I notice them shutting down and that is hard because it should be their experience too. And I should be able to speak Spanish and I'm trying, work on it, but it's hard. So when there is that language barrier it is helpful to know how to establish more communication even if your language isn't always the same.

CJ: Awesome, that's great.

Thank you and Goodbyes

32: 15 interview ends

Project: A Museum Educator's Identity Toolkit

Media Name/Type: 2018.MET.CEJ.A01.mp3

Researcher: Cat Jensen

Date Recorded: 5/16/18

Interviewee (s): Educator B (EB), Confidentiality Agreement

Location: Via Phone

Subject: Educator Identity in a Museum Space

Key Words: Museum, Identity, Education

00:00:00 Introduction/Project Background

...

00:03:20

CJ: Talk a little about what you do at your museum.

EB: So a main part of a museum employees work is that we interact with hundreds of different kinds of people in the general public so you meet a really broad scope of different kinds of people coming in and at the same time a lot of the people who work in museums are specifically tied to a certain type of research in science or a specific kind of art and sometimes are not focused on how to engage with the general public so this is a valuable thing to be doing. Myself I started kind of in the opposite direction, I work in a science museum but I never considered myself to be a scientist.

I've always been a human experience orienting person in my career and then I had to learn the science when I got there, you know? And I think for a lot of people it went the other way around.

C: Do you consider yourself a scientist now?

EB: Yeah! Now I would consider myself a scientist. But it was a very personal experience for me to just like, even come to terms with that. Just, for my own identity, I never really thought I could be a scientist, I never really saw myself in that way so it was very intimidating for me when I first started working there and I remember coming home crying a couple of times because I felt like I wouldn't be able to fit in with this academic kind of way and I felt really intimidated by it. A part of my persistence to learning all of it was that I knew that if I was going to learn all of this stuff and then I could start being myself with the other educators in my peer group which is like, intellectual and as people who are working in an academic way. I wasn't ready to see myself like that so it was a really satisfying experience.

06:30:00

CJ: Thank you so much for sharing that. If you want to share, have there been other times in your life where you felt you couldn't connect to or claim something as an identity?

EB: Yeah, I think that has been a very strong pattern in my life and if anything that's become my strength is going into uncertain territory and taking it on, for example when I was younger, I was

homeschooled...adapting to public school was a culture shock. I wasn't raised to raise my hand and have to think about the thirty other kids in the room.

08:11:00

EB: And being raised in a Latino family which came with its own flavor of machismo and then on the other side being raised in a family that's very, very alternative and a family of feminism and a family of very outspoken women, so trying to navigate my identity between those two worlds, between my dad's side of the family and the way that my mom raised us at home.

[Section omitted for confidentiality]

09: 26:00

I feel like my whole identity...my mom's white my dad isn't so that whole thing that biracial people go through, I'm not quite brown enough to be brown, not quite white enough to be white, I never know where I stand. I speak Spanish but I have an American accent, I don't feel like I really fit on any side. I'm bisexual, which is another part of it.

CJ: Yeah, there are so many intersections.

EB: Oh, yeah. This is probably why I am so interested in other people's experiences. I think it gives me a lot of affirmation to know that other people go through these, loss of identity and identity crisis' trying to find their place in the world and so if I'm going to be working in a museum I think it is one space where people can feel welcome even when that is something that may be scary and unfamiliar to them. I work in museums because I want to be a gatekeeper to that, the person opening that door.

CJ: That's a perfect tie in to speaking about how or if your identities influence how you do your work as an educator. Can you talk about that, how and if your identity impacts your work?

00:11:32

EB: I think that inquiry based learning is very natural for me. Being homeschooled, I also spent a ton of time in museums and libraries and in general public common spaces growing up so I feel comfortable in that space. I also really that because I wasn't ingrained with the idea that the role of a student is to sit down and be a consumer of information and just listen and take what the teacher gives you, that I was much more taught to come to my own conclusions and explore and there were a lot of open ended questions and I could choose my own route that I am a reflection of my own educational upbringing which is very similar to the work I do in the museum.

00:12:00

EB: I guess for me specifically I think that I think that kind of makes me maybe a little more change in two people are there at emotionally with what we're learning and when something seems controversial to them and I have an emotional response to something that we're learning I

think that's what makes it interesting to me That's what I pay attention to, to how people feel about something probably more than the content right now, so if I start talking about gravity and I can see that if someone is interested they light up And it's really natural for me to tune into what to go into and follow.

CJ: What about when someone is unsure of content?

EB: That I think that might be a little bit, one of my strengths. And also if I can see that someone's intimidated by something I think that's it's more important to address the idea of doing something with scary or doing something it's hard...

CJ: More important than addressing the content?

EB: Yeah, yeah. because when you do science and have a certain point where you might have to face the facts and it's time to change your mind about something that can be very scary for people and so I like talking through that process and what it means to change your mind and why that's so important

CJ: Is there a particular way you approach that with them?

14:19:00

[Thinking]

An example is [an experiment about vacuums in space we do]. The point of it is if you are an astronaut in outer space, don't forget to wear your space suit. And for me, the moral of the story or the show that I create is when we are scientists and we are doing experiments, it's always okay to be wrong because it's always okay to change your mind and that's part of the history of science. We take what we've been given from this generation that came before us and we get to look at it critically and we get to change things if there is new data that shows different information.

CJ: That's great thank you. [Phone breaks] Can you still hear me?

EB: Yeah.

00:17:12

CJ: Okay, great. Because I'm looking at personal identity but also systems that contribute to identity, especially those that are historic that museums have long participated in like white supremacy and colonization, I'm also asking for thoughts on that.

EB: Yeah, right, there is a really dark side to the history of museums, for sure.

CJ: Absolutely, there are all these systems at work at the time that we are all involved in some way. I'd like to shift gears and talk about educator vs guest or audience power.

EB: Can you repeat that?

CJ: Audience vs educator power

00:18:51

EB: Oh, uh-huh, yeah.

CJ: I've been talking to educators about when they have been aware (if they have) of times when they have been an agent of power and how that can be addressed when educating. An example-

EB: Yeah, so...

CJ: Oh, did you have an example in your head?

EB: Yeah, but I would be interested to hear your example too

CJ: An example that I always go to is that if I'm doing a class I try to be aware of whether or not I am calling on more white students than students of color.

00:20:19

EB: I have a couple of things.

CJ: Sure.

EB: First off, today I noticed that I was in a class and I noticed a subconscious thing that happened. There were eleven kids so around two kids per table and there was a group of two girls that were working on their project and I noticed that I went over to them and I thought to myself am I going to try to help them more because they are girls?

CJ: Can you provide some context? Where were they doing?

EB: So they were trying to crack a code to open a box and there were five groups and every group is working on the same thing and two other groups started to get ahead and I could feel a sense of urgency physiologically in my own body and I started to go around to each of the tables, but the first one I walked over to was the table of girls-and I guess I thought to myself, like, I think that I have a bias and that I'm trying to help the girls first because they are girls and they might not figure it out.

CJ: Mhm.

EB: And then I walked away.

...

EB: But I think I have that bias because I definitely had that bias within myself and I think that I probably...the times in my life where that bias existed strongest in myself is during the times when I never would have admitted it and lately I feel like I'm acknowledging it even it's on a subtle level, it's there, you know?

00:23:40

CJ: What are some ways you acknowledge that? There is something I do where I take a couple of breaths when I notice a bias and then I take pause to reassess and ask myself, where is this coming from? Why am I thinking this? How am I going to do differently now?

EB: Yeah, I think that's what happens for me. I started to feel like we needed to hurry just because the other kids happen to be moving a little faster and I wanted them to all finish at the same pace and so without thinking about it my body just took me to the girls' table first, assuming that they would need more help and then I was standing over there and had a moment of pause where I was like, okay, first of all it's not like they are really far behind there are other tables that are where they are too and also, we don't need to be in a hurry. We are not in a hurry right now, so I was able to step away from that situation.

...

24:25:00

CJ: I'm assuming they got their box open?

EB: Oh, yeah, they figured it out!

Another one I've been thinking about, today, actually, but I think about this stuff a lot, and so I was thinking about how today I called on the same girl multiple times because in this particular class she was the only girl raising her hand and then I looked at the group and was like, it's about 50/50 but she was the only girl who raised her hand. And there were a bunch of boys who were raising their hand and I just thought about that. Cause for a second I was like, oh, I'm calling on the same person over and over again but then was like, well why am I not calling on the boys?

[Phone breaks]

EB----It was just something that I noticed----

CJ: Yeah, that's a tricky situation to be in because there is this power dynamic where you don't want it to seem like you are favoring certain students, potentially they are in a place where developmentally that will have an impact on relationships with their peers or perceptions of themselves but it also feels uncomfortable to put people on the spot

EB: Yeah, I definitely still do that too. If I ask a question where students raise their hand and then call on them and allow them to "pass" and not respond, am I doing a disservice? What is the cost of that?

...

00:25:10

EB: There was this one thing that happened, where I feel terrible about how I handled it, in inaction. I really pride myself on being someone who generally speaks up when there is something going on and that I don't agree with. But, um, I just didn't know what to do.

[Breath]

CJ: Take your time.

EB: So I was in [gallery name] and I was teaching, facilitating at a cart and this guy came in, probably a chaperone, with five kids or so, some were younger some were older and they were Black, and he was super excited about being in the museum and we were chatting about the heart and he had a lot of personal stories about how everything applied to his own life and he motioned to...maybe they were his daughters...and said, girls, look this is how it will be in your own life if you are strong and healthy he started taking about their health regiments at home and then he was just like, "yeah, yeah, you know I have always loved science it is just so interesting and so exciting and I'm a mechanic but I really think that I should have been a scientist and I love science," and then in front of his kids he said, "I know that sounds ridiculous, a Black guy like me being interested in science. I don't know what it is, it's weird, like all my friends tell me it's weird, but I like science."

...

EB: And he said in front of his daughters and in this way that was like, "maybe Black people shouldn't be interested in science" and I didn't really know what to do...and I felt like it was this weird place of well who am I as a white appearing person to tell your black children what you should be feeling or what your friends should be saying. I also feel like I didn't say anything because I was trying to protect myself from saying something "wrong" and it was probably a selfish move because if he had been a white person saying that to me, I would have said something...and I felt really bad about it afterwards because I feel like I was really flippant about it and his daughters saw that and to his daughters I am a scientist and can represent scientists and I was pretty sad and ashamed that they saw that and that I didn't say something to correct the statement that Black people shouldn't be interested in science.

00:27:25

C: Thank you for sharing that. When working with the public we need ways and conversations to talk about when something like that happens. It can be difficult in the moment because sometimes you don't realize what's been said until later and a reality of being in a busy gallery space is that our focus is never just on one experience, you were also aware of those kids who were there and that they were having an experience too.

EB: Yeah. I think my advice to myself would be, even if you don't know what to say, you always want people to feel like you're being really honest. I feel like I should have at least said, "that doesn't feel right to hear you say that."

00:28:00

It's weird because we are in a position of power, as educators but we're also servers in a way, like, we are in a serving position, and those power dynamics in that, there are times when it is not our place to comment on other people's lives and things like that, but, I don't know, I guess I just didn't want to tell him he was wrong about his own experience.

CJ: What do you think might have happened, if you had said something?

00:29:15

He might have had his feeling hurt and shut down and stopped interacting with me because he felt kind of guilty about what he had said...but ultimately he would hopefully think about it, because that's the point. Yeah.

I mean, I feel like I should have done something, I should have done something. I shouldn't have just let that comment slide.

CJ: If something like that is to happen again, do you feel confident you'll say something?

EB: Well, at the museum we have discussions where we share out about this kind of thing and people are starting to come in to talk to us about race and gender identity and things like that and best practices and since I've become a part of that I feel like I'm getting help in a way. So if that same thing were to happen again, maybe I would talk about the idea of getting made fun of for something that is good, as a general theme and I would be like, "yeah, you know, people make fun of you for what you like and that sucks, when I was a kid I liked soft ball and it wasn't really popular for girls to do sports and sometimes boys would make fun of me for it but I kept doing it.

...

In science it's so important to have so many different perspectives at the table and we need to have all kinds of people interested in science...and maybe I could talk about Black people that I know who practice science and share some perspective.

CJ: Maybe some famous Black scientists?

EB: Yeah, yeah!

CB: Has the professional development going on been beneficial to other members of your team, you think?

00:32:12

I think there are a small portion of us who would say something but maybe most educators would be like, race is uncomfortable and probably would do the same thing I did, which is nothing.

CJ: [Some more info on project and how would like to put together resources for addressing scenarios like this one and more.]

Is there anything in particular you would like to have available?

EB: I think it's really helpful to say things out loud. Practice scenarios and things, in the space if you can or as much as is possible and also having it be an on-going part of professional development.

CJ: Thinking about steps an educator who is just beginning to examine their own identity and how it relates to their work can take, anything you would recommend to someone?

EB: A first step, would be to just listen and to by, whatever means, gain perspective of what it's like for people from marginalized groups to experience the way it feels to exist in a white, male dominated space and try to understand what that might be like.

00:38:57

CJ: Anything that comes to mind or that you want to mention? We are almost at time.

EB: I feel complete, thank you so much for doing this.

Thank you and goodbyes.

00:38: 58

Interview ends.

Project: A Museum Educator's Identity Toolkit

Media Name/Type: 2018.MET.CEJ.A01.mp3

Researcher: Cat Jensen

Date Recorded: 5/25/18

Interviewee (s): Educator C (EC), Confidentiality Agreement

Location: Via Zoom

Subject: Educator Identity in a Museum Space

Key Words: Museum, Identity, Education

00:00:00 Introduction/Project Background

CJ: ...so this can go all kinds of directions. People have talked about like shared personal stories of ways that they've tried to make their education more inclusive. People have talked more intently about privilege. And then people have talked about their learning styles and what they would want as far as a resource for learning more about identity. So yeah. Yeah. Does that make sense?

EC: Oh cool.

CJ: So to get started tell me a little bit about what's identity means to you when you hear the word identity.

EC: It bring up a number of things. Number one, a question: What is that? Yeah there's a potential crisis.

[Laughter]

EC: And then it's like, there are a lot of different aspects to being a person and you want to know yourself but I'm not completely there. I'm a woman and I'm queer and that's some of how I've defined myself, but that feels so limiting. I also recognize that people are always taking in what they think of my identity because identity comes with a whole lot of the society around it

CJ: Yeah.

EC: Sometimes it's like an outfit you are putting on and you're asking, can I change this? Can I wear this? Is this me?

00:03:01

CJ: When you say you said that being queer and a woman feels limiting, what do you mean by that?

EC: There's much more than that. Like you could put me down as being queer but am in a place that cares? Where I am at risk because I am? Is this all I'm seen as once I check that box?

CJ: Yeah.

EC: So, it's more like I know I am more than just a queer woman and that doesn't have to impact what I am capable of but it does impact the way people look at me and understand me.

EC: Tell me about more about this for you.

CJ: This project?

EC: Yeah, what's going to be in it?

CJ: Part of part of what I'm hoping is that this is going to be continuing and going to be maybe a lifelong project. I'm hoping that people could do some of these exercises and look at the materials and sort of use that to gain insight into how we can open space for things like empathy and being able to look at your museum space and make change. An example that comes to mind is that I went to an event last night. And it was kind of typical museum event in my experience where I volunteered and I showed up nothing was organized.

EC: Yeahhhhhh. [laughter]

00:05:21

CJ: And I even as the volunteer had to set up my station and figure out how to facilitate the experience I was doing. And immediately someone tried to get into the event and there was no wheelchair ramp. And so I rallied some people to lift their chair up the stairs. But it was immediately apparent that someone just didn't even consider that identity as being a part of their potential audience when planning in this space.

CJ: So I'm trying to sort of create something where lays out all of these different ways that people can identify in the world based on the systems we've created for ourselves. Asking educators: when you engage with your space who is represented and who's present and who do you want there to be the potential to be present.

EC: Yeah yeah yeah. When you were giving that example I was thinking about how we are always asking this question in museums: where are all X people but we don't have any on staff or in charge so start by hiring people from the communities you want to see!

00:05:55

CJ: Yeah, the makes me think of everything that's happening with the Brooklyn Museum and how their curator of African Art is White and how there continues to be this problem right, where the people in power are still making the rules based on whiteness.

EC: Yeah

CJ: And I know that part of my doing this project is still contributing to that.

EC: Yeah, but you're trying to open up the avenue where people who are white can really look at themselves and people who are not can do more of what you are doing.

C: That's the hope.

00:07:55

CJ: There also needs to be an avenue, especially in this field where white people get that you have to decolonize yourself before you can decolonize your space. Like you can't get new people in your museum space unless you understand what makes it welcoming or not like if you have symbols of colonization on your museum and you're trying to include indigenous peoples you have to think about how it might be painful for them to even enter your building. That's a little bit of my ranting...

EC: I'm glad to hear it! I do too much of that on Facebook. Last night I took a quote about white privilege and posted it and it said "White people are like ostriches consciously burrowing their heads in the sand and hiding from reality." That's exactly what vexes me most about white people. Their unwillingness to accept the fact that race has an impact on how well they live their lives. You would like it, you should check it out, I'll have to look it up but something were white people explain why "they are oppressed."

[Laughter]

00:07:57

EC: I just put an exact quote from that article and there was one guy really trolling, he wasn't even spelling and was pulling out every stereotypical sad sob story about White people possible and I was just like, "I honestly don't believe you're a real person. I don't think I've ever come in contact with someone is genuinely so dense that they can't see themselves and look at their own history." Anyway, so let's continue...

CJ: Yeah. Tell me about your educator journey. How did you get to where you are now?

EC: Well look all with what I chose to major in, in college I always consider it a teacher. First I did early childhood education [at a place] which they're known for their education programs because they are a teacher's college. Yeah but I didn't like it so I thought about what I really wanted to do and one day got up and I switched to Anthropology. Then I got into Archeology which I did for years and then when I applied to work in a museum the rest was pretty much history, been in museums ever since.

00:10:29

EC: And the rest is pretty much history yeah.

CJ: Would you say part of your identity involves being an educator?

EC: It sort of depends... I would like to be a full blown educator in the realm of exhibits someday. I would love to design more education programs and train people how to do those things and I also know a lot of tricks to engage with the community around that. Here at [museum] when I see people just wandering around, I always approach and say hey do you have any questions? What can I do for you? How can I talk to you? What do you want to know?

And I purposely try to only give them information about what it is they are curious about, but I also tried to direct their attention to a less white area.

CJ: How do you that?

EC: I make sure to direct them to our Native American exhibits and mention white occupation in this area as well.

CJ: I'm thinking about engaging in those conversations as a non-native person. Are there certain ways that you approach that? Do you make your position in relation to that information clear to visitors in any way?

EC: Yes. So I guess.

CJ: Tell me about how you approach those conversations.

EC: It depends on who I'm talking to, like, I know talking to older white couple's I don't always ask the same questions or day the same things as when I'm dealing with millennial's or people my age or younger or people who I can tell are open minded that.

00:13:25

EC: I tend to just be like, so I'd love to talk about the non-white history of this area! So then we will talk about the indigenous communities here and the archeological evidence.

CJ: When you do that and do you ever talk about your own work with native populations?

EC: The conversation rarely lasts long enough for people to take a personal interest in my life history. So it's not pertinent in that conversation, it doesn't have to come up. What about you?

CJ: The indigenous exhibit where I now work is very far from decolonized it's still pretty old as is diorama style in the sense where it's like, "here's this artifact, here's what the person who quote unquote found it and brought it to this museum thinks that it's for." And there is only sometimes a record indicating that it was bought and even then there is no evidence that it was legal or ethical transaction.

EC: Ah.

CJ: So I'm trying to practice when I'm in that gallery space engaging with people about the cultural resources there, that I am always introducing my position as a non-native person. And

really finding ways to say, you know, just because these objects are presented in this way doesn't mean that the descendant community doesn't continue to live here and practice this art form.

EC: Yeah... that's something I've been thinking about too. Because you want to like challenge ideas of what people think museums art for and what services they provide to the public.

CJ: And also make it very clear that some of the practices that people know about museums are no longer what we want to do.

EC: Yeah like how serious some museums have been about adhering to NAGPRA and really making sure the public knows why collection items are no longer there.

CJ: Yeah exactly.

EC: OH, my gosh, like what's happening with the British Museum and how they won't give anything back to communities and how upsetting that is.

CJ: Right. Yeah there's this perception that oh but the museums like the savior are the keeper of this culture.

00:17:31

CJ: When actually descending communities should the keepers of their own culture.

EC: Yes. Unfortunately, folks on reservations have a really difficult situation. I've worked on reservations where there was this divide between generations, where older members remember things like The Long Walk or remember hearing stories and the outside world is really untrustworthy and will they grow and change and adapt to changing times? And the younger generation is like, we want to leave and get new jobs and make money.

And some of it makes perfect sense, like when older generations practice traditional medicine, of course you would! You know, when you're out on the plains and you use what you have and I'm trying not to sound like a colonizer here... There were Native American communities worked where there was no talking of germ theory because there is such a long history of abuse there.

CJ: Yeah, there's a long historic history of Western medicine being really invasive and really problematic.

EC: Yeah, that should be a big part of Museum studies, looking at genealogical and historical trauma.

00:21:29

CJ: Absolutely, thank you. I want to shift gears a little bit but kind of keep the same vein of the conversation going. So not all Museums operate the same. And not all museums are providing

audiences with the same information. Do you feel like working at a historic site presents unique challenges, engaging in this work? Could you speak a little to that?

EC: Well there are definitely financial challenges.

[Laughter]

EC: And the challenge of us being a monument to white people's achievements. In the history there is a lot of pain and so one of the challenges is adapting to the current cultural climate where we're trying to be more sensitive to these things. I'm sure the older volunteers here who have been around since the beginning of the establishment of this place as a museum, feel a little betrayed.

We are no longer exemplifying what they are used to a historic place being and we're making the changes and changing the narratives. But we need them, so how do you get them on your page? I think what's happening is we are making changes and people can really stay or not stay. It's that thing where if you are going to support new people and new communities, the people who have been in charge and coveted the space have to move aside.

00:26:02

[Sound of educator getting to work outside, talking to animals to get them to eat.]

00:26:04

CJ: Yeah, well I am going to let you get to work. Anything else before we end?

EC: Nope, I think we are all good.

Interview ends.

Project: A Museum Educator's Identity Toolkit

Media Name/Type: 2018.MET.CEJ.A01.mp3

Researcher: Cat Jensen

Date Recorded: 5/29/18

Interviewee (s): Educator D (ED), Confidentiality Agreement

Location: Via Zoom

Subject: Educator Identity in a Museum Space

Key Words: Museum, Identity, Education

00:00:00 Introduction/Project Background

...

CJ: So to get started tell me what has influenced your identity

ED: The environment that I grew up, absolutely. It impacts how I make choices day today and how I choose to present myself to the world but also to myself. So if we're talking specifically about me, I grew up in a predominantly [biracial] community and I am actually biracial. I also had a significant amount of time studying peoples and cultures and liberal arts and that impacts the way I see the world today.

CJ: Can you expand on some of the choices you've made?

00:03:40

ED: Well, I made the switch from being in a very capitalistic industry in tech sales, very male-dominated and income dominated. And I made the decision to switch, something that resonates more with what I believe in. I have more of an interest in anthropology and education and the museum where I am now. So that's what I mean by choices I made. I made the switch to be in the place where I am now. It speaks to who I am and parts of my identity I want to be for filling in a professional capacity.

CJ: So maybe the part of your identity that was impacted by your education influenced that decision?

ED: Yeah there you go.

00:03:58

Talk about the work you do now Museum. When does your identity show up?

ED: At the museum I do a lot of guest interactions. I lead tours, where you're working with the public and guiding them through a story of the history of [our area] and then I do a lot of education about our exhibits.

I encourage visitors to ask questions about a lot of objects and ask question and challenge certain beliefs that they have held about an exhibit and also do outside research to develop our curriculum a bit more.

00:05:42

CJ: If you had to define the demographic of your particular museum space what does it look like?

ED: Good question. A lot of tourists, so I wouldn't say that is necessarily depicts the population [where we are]. Majority white, majority upper-middle class, but then during the week we do see a lot of students under age 18, mostly students of color. So, I really relate to the kids coming through the museum. As a kid, I was part of one of those classroom groups coming to the museum so in that respect I really enjoy and connect with seeing that every day.

...

ED: I guess I see myself reflected in that experience. When I deal with the general public, though, that's when I really turn on my "sales/capitalist" sort of persona. That's when I become very outgoing try to find common ground with everyone so that just makes their learning experience better and in my opinion it makes it easier for me to be more comfortable and have a nice flow to the lessons that we teach.

CJ: Why do put on a persona?

00:09:27

ED: I think I'm a little bit self-conscious about coming from a lower socioeconomic childhood and being Asian American appearing when a majority of my audience is white ... so I think I overcompensate, I try to make everyone feel more comfortable all the time and if there is someone in the group that I am intimidated by or I am or am not sure how they are going to approach later on down the road...remember that I had talked to you about that tough conversation with a visitor at a cart and then he was on my tour later and I noticed myself giving him more attention because of our experience earlier?

CJ: Yeah, I remember. In those situations, then do you find yourself putting on one identity and putting others aside?

00:12:07

ED: Oh 1000 percent. I've done a quite a bit of research of my own identity as being the "model minority" no one really sees me as also my other ethnicities and I absolutely lean into the model minority stereotype when I am uncomfortable.

CJ: What does model minority mean to you?

ED: Model minority to me means obedient, intelligent, efficient but not trying to rock the boat too much. If there is something I am intimidated by I will try to present a different level of my identity first, if that makes sense. If there's someone I'm not so comfortable with, I will put that model minority identity first and then turn on others little by little to see how the comfortability is.

CJ: Comfortability of?

ED: Mostly if I'm working with white guests, I don't become my full self, right away to see if they are going to be comfortable with what I have to say. So turning on my roles as a social justice advocate and my childhood experiences. What I've found is that resonates with someone who doesn't grow up with people who look like me.

[CJ Spoke to my ways of turning up femme identity when in the presence of a men if they can sense they are threatened by a masculine or androgynous presentation]

00:14:13

ED: This is something that no one ever really talks about...it's like I'm betraying myself in some ways, by hiding parts of my identity it's like if you're not your true self ALL the time how is anyone ever going to accept your true self?

...I struggle with that sometimes...

CJ: Yeah I think sometimes it becomes about what role I'm engaging in with the public. If I'm giving a tour part of my goal is to keep everyone engaged and safe. Part of my goal is to make sure that no one goes back and demands their money back because of something they received of or from me. part of it is to make sure they get their money's worth because the museum deserves that and they still deserve an experience that meets where they are at but if I'm at [one of our more challenging activity carts] and if I have the opportunity to speak a hard truth I'm going to do that because that is what that exhibit is there for, of course, my whiteness means I can probably do that more than you or others can.

ED: I feel like the only times I get into those conversations is what a guest is not white. I honestly feel like if a guest is white I almost get into a battle stance and try to present things more neutrally sometimes and not taking ownership of the stance I'm taking because I don't want it to be personal, but then I don't like that I do that.

CJ: It's this interesting balance right because you have an obligation to keep yourself feeling safe and secure and to keep other people around you in that space safe too.

CJ: how do we consider that we might also be making face judgements of someone before they engage with us?

00:19:38

ED: Hmm. A beauty of the activity cart is that people can opt into the experience, if you are approaching the cart you are there to learn it's, It is not something you're forced to do it all.

One of the times that pops into my head is when I was doing the [cart about group of people] and there was a gentleman there and I was talking about how these communities are still around and how there about 6 million people who still identity [this way] and then...

And he was like well but they're dead anyway so they lost. And this was one of those times that I was very adamant, where I was like, no, I completely disagree with you. You didn't listen to what I just said, this community is not dead. And I could tell he felt like he had offended me

Then, he started to backtrack by saying so everyone just identifies as what they want to identify as and blah blah...In talking to him a little bit I feel like he was from Poland or new to the United States and that just made me think why...What made him have that mentality? Interesting that while his identity was white European from Europe he was still seeing brown as weak and less than and taking on a colonizer attitude, that was what came out of our conversation.

23:53:00

CJ: Oof, what a microaggression. When something like that happens how do you find ways to decompress or take care of yourself?

ED: I'm a talker so I like to go to someone and be able to talk about it. I also reflect a lot later so in that situation, I went to decompress by talking to someone about what happened and then I usually can push it down and keep going. I keep going through my day but usually once the day's over that's when I think about what made someone say what they did and wonder what my position was in that role and what I could have done better. That happens after I'm off the clock. Journaling helps too.

....

00:25:50

ED: I love journaling. It helps me calm down and get my thoughts out. If I want to go back to it, I carry a highlighter and I can highlight what stuck out to me for later. I also follow a lot of social identity blogs from people being proud of their minority identities and it makes me feel better.

CJ: So those are things that you always look to?

ED: Yeah, I hadn't thought of it as a coping mechanism or self-care things but that's what I do.

CJ: Is there a particular area in your museum space where you go when you need a break?

ED: It kind of varies. I like a space that is quiet where I can eat.
[laughter]

and I like somewhere I can walk.

00:29:21

ED: I was thinking about having empathy with someone who has an identity other than myself, can I expand a little more on that?

CJ: Yes of course, please.

ED: Something that I find myself doing is that if there's somebody that does make me intimidated or if there's someone something that's intimidating in a way don't have the same Identity as them I try to recognize that in myself and ask questions I'm a big question asker and in that way I feel like they get a little bit more attention and might learn a little bit more so I can be empathetic because I don't have that experience any information I put forth he's going to be not correct.

CJ: So you use questions as a tool?

ED: Yeah, I can begin a conversation with questions like, where did you grow up, what brings you here... Very like softball questions at first: what were your parents like. Maybe if people want to go a little deeper then I ask, what did you study in school or what was it like for you growing up? More identity questions I guess.

CJ: What if someone doesn't answer or engage?

00:34:48

ED: If they continue with one word answers I know the type of questions I am asking aren't resonating so I will switch the topic. If you ask enough questions they are going to find something that they can latch on to that they want to talk about.

People love talking about themselves So eventually, you'll find something.

We work a lot with the volunteers and for a lot of volunteers this tends to be their first time working in a professional organization. Sometimes it can be intimidating and they can be a little bit shy. One of our volunteers who works on Sundays, I asked about what he likes to do on the weekends, because it's a question about how you spend your free time and what you love to do. that was when we begin to bond, after he shared that.

CJ: I love the use of that question!

00:38:16

[More on personal identity]

ED: Growing up I always felt kind of torn, being multi-racial. I couldn't be too much of one identity over the other because then I would be letting down one side of the family of choosing

one over the other and never really wanted to do that and because of those feelings I feel like I never really was who I wanted to be...

[Traffic sounds interruption]

ED: So I specifically avoided groups that spoke to one side of my racial identity or the other because I was intent on staying neutral but because I did that...staying neutral in our world means staying white and I think I have become a by-product of that and I wish I hadn't missed pieces of that. We had a biracial club at my college and I wish I had done that.

CJ: Wow, take a breath.

ED: Yeah, just a minute.

ED: As far as learning more about an identity that isn't my own. I am really interested in our elderly population and how the world has changed very drastically since they were my age and I notice that affects the way they make decisions and I find myself thinking about that a lot, so I would like to learn more about what I can do to support that community, if that can be in the uh, end product.

00:42:51

CJ: Anything else you wanted to add or focus on?

00:47:09

ED: I found this museum because when I came here on a field trip as a child I remember it being the first time my heritage was reflected back to me in a historical context because the history we had always been taught was very Eurocentric. Even if it was local it was about those who were Europeans and I didn't identify with them...coming to this museum sparked that I didn't even know that my people had a history and that clicked in my brain. The opportunity to learn more about myself and my people that opened the door for me and that's how I got involved in global studies.

I felt that in my career I wanted to do something that would impact my community so I came to volunteer here and specifically made time in my work schedule to make time to give back and a bucket list of mine is to be integrated into the community I grew up, so now I'm here.

CJ: Thank you for sharing so much today.

00:50:03

Goodbyes, interview ends.

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