



To: Laura Christian, DISCOVERY Children's Museum (DCM)
From: Cheryl Kessler, R&L Consulting
Date: April 2, 2018
Re: IMLS MFA 2015, Staff Professional Development Follow-up Survey

Memorandum of Evaluation Findings

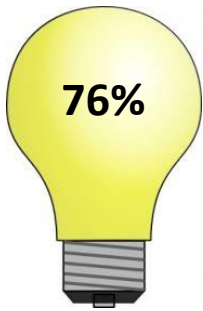
To understand the impact and application of interaction training workshops for floor staff conducted in the fall of 2017 by the Oklahoma Museum Network, R&L Consulting developed a series of Yes/No, scaled, and open-ended questions for an online survey. The questions focused on:

- Whether and how the training sessions increased the application and understanding of inquiry-based interactions; improved staff's ability to facilitate educational experiences for visitors; and to what extent staff felt they could easily adapt to changing circumstances when interacting with visitors.

- The extent to which staff feel....
 - ...more empowered in their work.
 - ...ownership of their work.
 - ...responsible for supporting visitors.
 - ...enthusiasm for helping visitors.
 - ...pride in their role at DCM.

The survey was posted on SurveyGizmo and made available for staff to complete at DCM during their regular shifts between March 6-16, 2018. A total of 21 staff completed the survey.

Understanding



The percentage of staff who said that the OMN workshops **INCREASED** their understanding of inquiry-based interactions (n=17). In addition, four respondents said they were unsure and one said that their understanding had not increased.

The majority of the examples provided by respondents (n=20) of how they had applied inquiry-based knowledge in their work since the OMN training fell into two categories:

58%

Asked visitors open-ended questions

25%

Troubleshooting/co-learning with visitors.

Other examples included taking extra time with visitors, sharing an exhibit “secret,” encouraging visitors to use their senses, identify differences in materials, and to be patient. For example:

Turning everyday exhibits into secrets to share with the children, who in turn can share that secret with their family.

Asking visitors what they think about different material characteristics (i.e. weight or color) before selecting what to use on their projects.

In Toddler Town...I asked one of the children how the bread dough felt, smelled, and if they could leave their handprint in it.

I did an art program and asked [visitors] how they can adjust their strategy when sculpting forms.

During a facilitated program (Currency Counts). At the conclusion of the program, the visitor was still engaged with counting and sorting coins, so I added play money (bills) to the mix. We spent some time together exploring the bills and discussing different ways to earn money.

Application



The percentage of staff who said that the OMN workshops INCREASED their application of inquiry-based interactions (n=17). Two respondents said they were unsure and two others said the workshops had not increased their inquiry-based interactions.

Over half of the examples from respondents (n=14) of how they had applied inquiry-based skills since the OMN training fell into two categories:

43%

Encouraged questioning and discussion

14%

Asked visitors to consider different strategies.

Other examples included challenging and encouraging visitors to try rather than providing an answer, being a co-learner, and allowing for more time when needed. For example:

I am more mindful of serving as a co-learner with visitors instead of relaying factual information. There is still a need for factual information but it can be shared through an inquiry-based approach.

Giving time for children to create or come up with the solution to a problem.

I challenge visitors in Patents Pending to make their own inventions and then test it out. When it doesn't work properly, I encourage them to try different things instead of just giving them a quick answer.

Facilitate Educational Experiences



The percentage of staff who said that the OMN workshops INCREASED their ability to facilitate educational experiences with visitors (n=18). Three said they were unsure.

Staff examples of facilitated educational experiences nicely reflect the OMN workshop components. For example:

During our workshops, I've been able to give brief descriptions of activities while allowing visitors to self-explore activities.

I have had a few guests in Design Zone that have really enjoyed exhibits and I have given them extra challenges to try out. I also have had guests that have given me the vibe that they would rather explore the gallery on their own and I allow them the space to do so.

I used the idea of tinkering to help a guest out with a project. I also learned that we do a lot more tinkering in the museum than I originally thought.

I recently co-facilitated a professional development workshop for educators and designed stations that encouraged hands-on learning and creative thinking. I visited each station throughout the workshop and worked alongside educators to support their learning experiences. However, I made sure that I was observant of those who needed support and those who were working well and exploring without requiring too much additional support.

Effectiveness of OMN Components

Staff identified the OMN workshop components where they saw or heard about the inquiry-based knowledge, application, or facilitation reported in the previous pages. Note that staff could choose multiple components and not all staff responded for each strategy shown. Regardless, the data show that the Inquiry and Art/Science Intersection components were where most staff learned these strategies.

Strategy	Components				
	Inquiry	Tinkering	Early Childhood	Art/Science Intersection	Learned elsewhere
Inquiry Application	57% (n=10)	37% (n=7)	37% (n=7)	53% (n=10)	11% (n=2)
Inquiry Knowledge	80% (n=16)	50% (n=10)	30% (n=6)	50% (n=10)	15% (n=3)
Facilitation	62% (n=13)	48% (n=10)	33% (n=7)	57% (n=12)	10% (n=2)

Adapt and Transition

Staff mean scores, on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is “Not at all” and 5 is “Extremely,” for being able to adapt to changing circumstances and making smooth transitions with visitors based on the OMN training were quite positive.

4.52

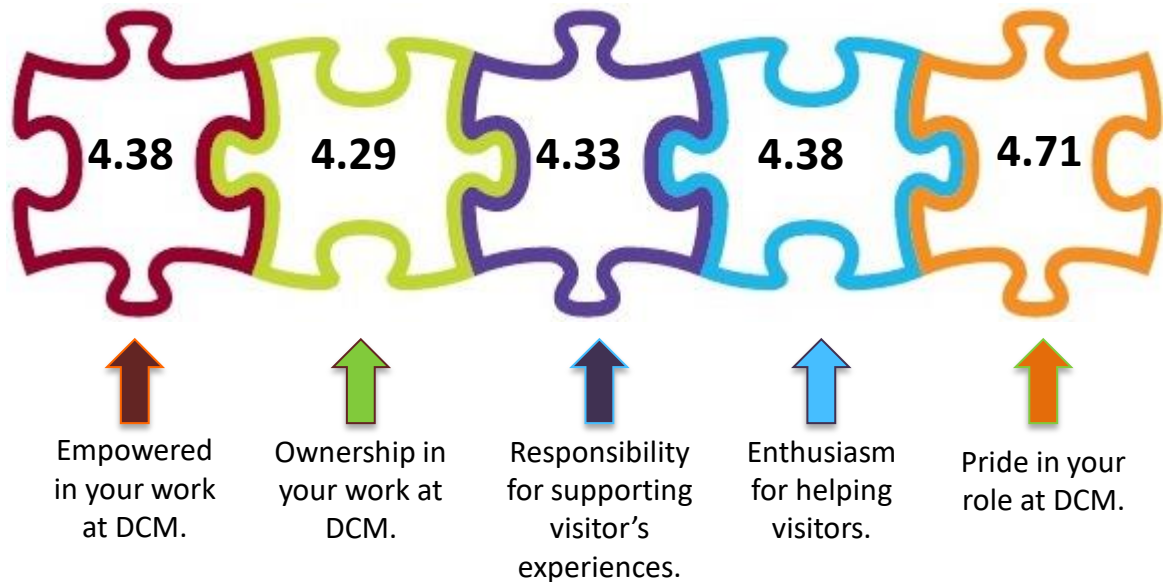
Extent to which staff feel able to easily adapt to changing circumstances when interacting with visitors.

4.24

Extent to which staff feel able to transition smoothly between topics or interests of visitors.

Staff Attitude

Equally impressive were staff mean scores, on the same 1 to 5 scale, for their feelings of empowerment, ownership, responsibility, enthusiasm, and pride.



The staff online survey data suggests that the OMN workshops were a positive experience for the majority of respondents. Staff descriptions provide clear evidence that the knowledge and skills gained were useful, timely, and welcomed. Additional support for this finding can be seen in a sample of respondents' final comments.

Now my engagements feel a little bit more carefree and fun versus rehearsed or required.

[The sessions were] really interesting. Changed my perspective on informal education and experience facilitation.

I thought the workshops were really fun and were a great way to explore different techniques we can implement into our museum.

[We] need more trainings like this more often to help us learn and refresh our minds.

I feel that the workshops did help but it slowly faded after awhile. So it would help if there was a way to teach us how to keep up with working with interactions.