

MUSEUMS AND SCHOOLS: AN ANALYSIS OF THE EDUCATIONAL "GAME"

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***A paper presented at the annual conference of the Australian Association for
Research in Education, Fremantle, Western Australia, 2-6 December 2001.***

This paper reports on an ongoing investigation into the relationship between museums and secondary school-based education. In a previously completed study the author identified contradictions and misperceptions as evident within the beliefs expressed by classroom educators and museum educators. While both communities assumed ostensibly that they were working cooperatively and effectively toward a shared goal my findings established that this was not the case. This presentation sets out the nature of problems identified within the museum/secondary school relationship using selected elements of Pierre Bourdieu's sociological theories and his notion of the game. Findings regarding the sites of contest and contradiction within the two settings are examined in terms of power, dominance, and unexamined conventional practices and philosophies. Such an analysis allows for identification of underlying social forces that maintain borders between museums and schools that are yet to be crossed.

Introduction

Museums and schools are often linked in the public mind and it is widely believed that they have a positive and mutually beneficial relationship. School services have traditionally constituted a major part of the educational activities of museums, while school-based education has considered museums as presenting valuable opportunities for learning (Anderson 1997, Berry 1998, Davis and Gardner 1993, Falk and Dierking 1992, Finlay 1977, Gardner 1991, Hooper-Greenhill 1989, 1994a, 1994b, 1994c, 1994d, Housen 1992, Mitchell 1996, Newsom and Silver 1978, O'Connell 1992, Sheppard 1993, Stone 1992, 1993, Zeller 1983, 1987, 1989). The development of school audiences is considered particularly important as a means of addressing identified inequalities within museum audiences (Anderson 1997, Bourdieu and Darbel 1991, Dimaggio and Useem 1978, Merriman 1991, Bennett and Frow 1991, Bennett 1994). However, there is evidence to suggest that the relationship between museums and schools is underdeveloped and is subsequently contributing to the reproduction of social inequalities related to museum visiting. A number of researchers have identified the relationship between museums and secondary schools as particularly problematic. Evidence from this literature demonstrates that secondary audiences are not effectively utilizing learning opportunities within museums and suggests a disjuncture between the two fields (Stone 1992, Eisner and Dobbs 1986, Grinder and McCoy 1985, Mathewson 1994). The extent to which this is true in Australia is unknown due to a lack of research in this area. Research into the relationship between museums and the secondary audience generated from a school-based perspective is particularly rare.

The Informing Study

Previous research conducted by this researcher provides an insight into the relationship between museums and secondary schools in Australia. The study examines a particular instance that illustrates problems in the museum/secondary school relationship and provides evidence that refutes the assumption that the relationship between museums and secondary schools is inherently positive (Mathewson 1994). The study of one museum, the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery (QVMAG), in Launceston, Tasmania, and secondary schools in its service area found low levels of utilization among secondary educators and identified ineffective communication and significant contradictions and misperceptions. These findings were in contrast to declared beliefs, among secondary educators and museum educators, respectively, that the relationship was positive and valuable and that utilization was only inhibited by structural factors. The contradiction between the reality of the relationship as evidenced in data collected and the beliefs expressed highlights a particular problem that is inhibiting the development of relationship between museums and secondary schools.

The research was conducted in partial fulfillment of an Honours degree at the University of Tasmania and was consequently small and exploratory in scale. It was undertaken under the supervision of Dr Margaret Robertson. The two main aims of the study were: (1) to review and evaluate the educational programs designed for secondary education as provided by the QVMAG, (2) to review the uses made of the QVMAG by secondary teachers and identify those factors that influence use. Participants included forty secondary educators from a variety of secondary disciplines, and the Education Officer of the QVMAG. A number of methods of data collection were employed. Information pertaining to the museum/secondary school relationship was provided through questionnaire responses and a number of follow up interviews. Checklists were compiled from the literature and applied to the observation of class visits and the provision of services and resources.

A "Bourdieuian" Analysis

While the data gathered was largely descriptive and idiosyncratic in nature, this presentation seeks to reanalyze the most significant findings that are supported within the literature using selected elements of the sociological theories of Pierre Bourdieu as a conceptual device to examine the sites of contest and contradiction found within the study. This enables the analysis to explore the sociological basis of identified problems inhibiting the development of the museum/secondary school relationship.

In his examination of human behaviour Bourdieu refers to "the game" as involvement in the social universe (1998: 77). This research conceives of the relationship between museums and secondary school audiences as actualized in the utilization of museums by secondary audiences as a distinct "game", with potential players being secondary educators and museum professionals. On the surface, it would appear that players actively engage in this game and are on the same "educational team" playing cooperatively toward a common goal. However, results from this research show that, because of the forces of social space, secondary educators and museum professionals are often focused on games that are distinct to their respective fields. The fields rarely collaborate as a team and when they do, museums dominate the game and effectively keep secondary educators out of play.

Patterns of Museum Utilization Among Secondary Educators

Results from the study showed that secondary educators believed that museums potentially provide valuable learning opportunities. Analysis of attitudes toward museum utilization indicated that secondary educators in the study were overwhelmingly positive about the

museum experience and revealed a number of areas of general agreement. Secondary educators agreed that:

- Museums provide valuable knowledge about the past
- Museums provide valuable opportunities for first hand experience as learning stimulus

In addition, those who had used services provided by the QVMAG indicated that they found these of a high value. These findings demonstrated that respondents acknowledged the value of museums to school based education and therefore indicated that respondents acknowledged the existence and importance of the game. However, while commitment to the stated beliefs would imply that secondary educators would actively seek out information and utilize services, this was found not to be the case. A majority of secondary educators were not actively utilizing the QVMAG and thus were not actively playing the game. Using Merriman's (1985) four visiting categories of non-visitors, occasional visitors, regular visitors and frequent visitors, the majority of participants could be placed within the non-visiting category (56%). Only seven per cent (7%) were rated as frequent visitors, visiting more than six times in the previous two-year period. This relatively low level of utilization indicated that while secondary educators acknowledged the value of the game in theory, they did not implement this belief in practice. This suggests that their participation was being inhibited by other factors.

**Table 1: Levels of Visitation to the QVMAG by Secondary Educators
Over the Previous Two Years**

VISIT FREQUENCY	%OF SAMPLE
0 times	56
1-3 times	30
3-6 times	7
> 6 times	7

The museum educator assumed that the apparent lack of engagement would primarily be the result of structural impediments. However, examination of the factors inhibiting use indicated that while physical access had some bearing on utilization, an absence of information was the most significant explanatory factor. Further results supported this, showing that twenty one per cent (21%) of the sample could not identify any service or resource provided by the museum. In addition when asked to indicate familiarity with particular services or resources no more than twenty six per cent (26%) of the sample could identify any one particular service or resource. Therefore, while it appeared that access to the museum was available to all and utilization was simply a matter of choice and physical access, a lack of knowledge about how to utilize the museum was more significant in determining museum usage. The fact that the museum educator believed that the information provided was adequate suggests that they had based practices on misperceptions about how familiar and informed secondary educators were in relation to the museum.

Table 2: Factors Inhibiting Museum Use Amongst Secondary Educators

FACTORS INHIBITING USE	% OF SAMPLE
Information	54
Time	28
Funds	13
Transport	8
Other	26
Additional factors listed in "other" category	
Lack of relevance	
Need to be topic specific	
No support for visits	

Further contradictions were evident in the apparent unwillingness of secondary educators to realize opportunities to gain knowledge about the museum. While lack of knowledge was identified as inhibiting utilization and the majority of secondary educators (79%) expressed a belief in the value of museum-led workshops for classroom educators, efforts undertaken by the museum to provide such knowledge had not been activated by secondary educators in the past.

The Explanatory Power of The Elements of Social Space

Bourdieu's central concepts of field, capital and habitus can be applied to the relationship in question as a means of exploring possible explanations for the contradictions and misperceptions apparent within the findings thus far. His notion of "fields" in particular allows a dynamic analysis of the conservation and transformation of the structure of social space and how that determines the relationship between key players. A key component of Bourdieu's theory, fields are defined as networks of social relations, structured systems of social positions within which struggles or manoeuvres take place over resources, stakes and access (Bourdieu 1990). They are structured spaces organized around the production, investment, exchange and accumulation of specific forms of capital. The term "capital" refers to the possession and accumulation of resources. Those resources are perceived as capital when they become valued as objects of struggle and function as a "social relation of power" (Bourdieu 1989: 375). The distribution of capital within a particular field reflects a hierarchical set of power relations among individuals within that field.

The widespread belief in the natural relationship between museums and schools, is based on the assumption that museums and schools belong to the same field and that museum professionals and school-based educators possess similar forms of capital. In reality, museums and schools operate in distinct, and at times opposing, fields, and their actions are determined by forces within those respective fields. Furthermore, primary schools and secondary schools can be viewed as related but distinct fields. Each field has a specific logic

that is established by the distinct "games" that occur within it. The specific logic of each field determines which properties, internalized as dispositions and objectified in economic or cultural goods, are valid and active in the market and function as specific capital (Bourdieu 1984: 113). Consequently different forms of capital dominate and legitimate the museum and school fields, respectively, and determine the positions of individuals within each field. Contest between the two fields for higher placement in the hierarchy of fields also places schools and museums in a contest that is not overtly acknowledged.

A relationship between the museum and school fields means that individuals from each field must interact with one another by moving from their original field to the other field, engaging in the games that occur in that field. Utilization of museums by secondary audiences generally requires that secondary educators move into the museum field. By moving into the museum field individuals enter the game. However, entering the game is misperceived as a choice as movement between the two fields is restricted by position and capital. Possibilities for action are perceived according to the position of an individual within a field. While secondary educators valued the learning opportunities provided by museums, they were precluded from entering the game because they did not perceive their personal involvement as a possible strategy. This can be attributed to a lack of "illusio" which Bourdieu defines as the act of attributing importance to a social game. According to Bourdieu entry into a field requires a relationship to that field of illusio and "each field calls forth and gives life to a specific form of interest, a specific illusio as tacit recognition of the stakes of the game and as practical mastery of its rules" (Wacquant 1989: 42). Therefore, for secondary educators to perceive movement into the museum field as a possible strategy, they required the specific illusio related to that field. While many valued the museum in theory, results clearly showed that few secondary educators possessed the illusio required for such personal involvement and thus did not perceive entering the game as a possible strategy from their position in the secondary school field.

Movement is also restricted because the specific capital that determines position within one field may not be valid and active in other fields. The distinctive forces that are active in the museum field are those which define the specific capital that are valid in that field. While secondary educators possess significant educational capital, this capital is defined by the secondary school field and cannot necessarily be transferred and used in the museum field. Consequently while secondary educators theoretically value the game and possess educational capital that is assumed to be relevant in the game, they are unable to enter because they do not have the specific resources required to gain a position in the museum field. Their deficiency in museum specific capital was particularly evident in the lack of knowledge secondary educators identified themselves as possessing with respect to the museum field.

If entry is able to be gained, the ability of secondary educators to participate in the game is undermined because they generally have not acquired the specific habitus required to achieve inclusion in the museum field. The logic of specific fields is established in the form of a specific habitus that can be viewed as a sense of the game and inclusion in a specific field requires the acquisition of the specific habitus related to that field (Bourdieu 2000). Likened to a law of direction and movement, the habitus constitutes a mental structure which having been inculcated into all minds socialized in a particular way is both individual and collective. It is an acquired system of preferences, principles of vision and division and a system of durable cognitive structures and schemes of action, which orient the perception of the situation and the appropriate response. These acquired systems and practices, when perceived by social categories of perception become symbolic differences and constitute a veritable symbolic language (Bourdieu 1998). Whilst habitus are the product of positions and thus are differentiated, they are also differentiating in the fact that they are generative

principles of distinct and distinctive practices. The field structures the habitus and the habitus contributes to constituting the field as a meaningful world (Wacquant 1989).

For secondary educators to develop a sense of the game as played in the museum field and consequently be able to play it with confidence and skill, they need to acquire the specific habitus related to the museum field. However, as the acquisition of the specific habitus takes place gradually and for the most part unnoticed, and is practically never explicitly set out or imposed, acquiring the specific habitus related to the museum field requires repeated experiences within the museum field. Consequently, the under-developed sense of the game exhibited by many secondary educators in this study suggests that the ability of secondary educators to gain inclusion in the museum/secondary school game was constrained in many cases by initial family experiences and schooling that did not provide repeated experiences within museums. While the influence of such factors is widely recognized with respect to general museum visitors, little attention has been paid to how experiences within family and education influence and inhibit the ability of classroom educators to utilize museums as a learning resource.

In the current relationship between museums and secondary schools interaction is generally dependent on secondary educators moving into the museum field and the game is structured according to the museum field. Museum professionals are rarely observed moving outside of their field. However, an effective and equitable relationship between museums and schools requires that museum educators enter the school field. Such movement can also be problematic as the same factors that prevent secondary educators from moving into the museum field operate to inhibit movement from the museum field into the secondary school field.

In this case the museum educator had experience and qualifications in primary school education, and this enabled them to develop the specific habitus, relevant capital and specific *illusio* related to that field. Consequently the Education Officer was able to move into the primary school field easily and had developed a positive relationship with agents in the primary school field. This was reflected in patterns of use that showed that the majority of classes attending the QVMAG were from the primary sector. For example, in the year spanning July 1992 to July 1993 eighty six per cent (86%) of classes that attended the QVMAG were from the secondary sector. By contrast, the Education Officer had no experience or qualifications in the specific area of secondary school education and had not acquired a sense of the secondary school game. While efforts had been made to develop a relationship with the secondary school field, the restrictions on movement had forced the Education Officer to withdraw from this field. Bourdieu observes that such withdrawal occurs when an individual recognizes, consciously or pre-consciously, that they don't fit in a field (1977).

The Domination of Museums and the Disempowerment of School Audiences

It is clear that because the majority of interaction in the museum/secondary school relationship occurs in the museum field and is consequently structured by the museum field, and because museum professionals are positioned within this field, they are able to exert their dominance over secondary educators. Secondary educators are placed in a position of domination by being required to move outside their field to participate in an unfamiliar game being played on unfamiliar territory, without the necessary resources and dispositions.

A number of researchers have identified the distinctiveness of the learning environment and the type of learning that occurs in museums as opposed to schools (Beer 1992, Davis and Gardner 1993, Griffin 1999, Hein 1998, Heumann Gurian 1991, Hicks 1986, Screven 1987, Williams 1994, Zeller 1985). The unique learning opportunities of museums are often in

contrast to the opportunities available within classrooms, while the imposed "physical space" of museums bears little resemblance to the common classroom. Lack of familiarity in this context significantly affects the capacity of secondary educators to participate equally in the game. This is supported by studies that have shown that many secondary educators lack confidence and competence within the museum context (Anderson 1997, Walsh-Piper 1989, Griffin 1999, Stone 1993). Consequently, secondary educators are playing at a clear disadvantage, which often leads them to choose not to enter or to withdraw to either sit on the bench or attend to other games. If they do enter they generally play defensively, responding to action undertaken by museum professionals, rather than initiating play. Alternatively, researchers have noted that classroom educators tend to inappropriately impose classroom teaching strategies and methods on the museum environment. This can be viewed as classroom educators attempting to transfer the game they are familiar with, that is the school game, to the museum field.

By contrast, museum professionals positioned in the museum field are adjusted to the demands of the game and are able to affirm their dominance by determining action and making the game function to their advantage. They are, as Bourdieu himself puts it "*as fish in water*" (Wacquant 1989, 43). The playing of the game on the museum home ground and the perceived "expert" status of museum professionals in this field enables them to further dominate the relationship by legitimating their role as a game referee and game manager, establishing and enforcing the rules of the game. Rules in the game define the ways in which museums may be utilized, the appropriate behaviour within museums, appropriate responses to displays, the choice and display of objects, the interpretation of displays, and the limitations of physical access. The negative images many secondary educators associated with museums, as shown in Table 3, suggests that the result of such rules are perceptions of museums as autonomous institutions that are governed by rules that reflect self interest and elitist orientations. Such images do not encourage participation among those outside the field.

Table 3: Images Secondary Educators Associated with the QVMAG

IMAGES	% OF SAMPLE
Educational institution	39
School library	26
Monument to the dead	26
Community centre	21
Church or temple	10
Department store	2
Other	18
Additional images listed in "other" category	

Well organized jumble stall

Empty, quiet, solemn

Lacking in energy

Static and insular

Dead,static

Enjoyable Sunday afternoon

The ability of secondary educators to take a more dominant role in the game is determined by the extent to which museum professionals share information about the nature of the game and the rules involved. By controlling the distribution of information about themselves, museums determine the potential players and the level of skill and knowledge such players participate with. In this case, the non-distribution of information was identified as a particular factor inhibiting the participation of secondary educators. Those who did participate appeared to have gained their information about the game through personal initiative. Fifty one per cent (51%) of secondary educators indicated that they obtained information about the QVMAG through their own personal visits. Regression analysis also indicated that communication between the QVMAG and individual secondary educators, which appeared to be initiated by the personal visits of secondary educators, had a positive effect on visit frequency. These findings suggest that the offensive action of secondary educators was encouraging participation more effectively than the distribution of information by the QVMAG. Those secondary educators that were on the team achieved inclusion because of their own initiative rather than by gaining an invitation or encouragement from the museum.

The Reproduction of the Social Order

The relations between museum professionals and secondary educators that have been described are the result of the underlying and unacknowledged forces that determine social order. This can be likened to an invisible separation of the museum and secondary school fields that decreases the power of individuals from the school field within the museum/secondary school game. It operates by reinforcing for museum professionals a feeling of belonging to the team and for secondary educators, a sense of exclusion. The dominance of museum professionals and the subsequent disempowerment of secondary educators in the museum/secondary school relationship is rarely recognized by museum professionals who are unconsciously absorbed in their "doing" or "praxis". According to Bourdieu, those with a feel for the game are adjusted to the necessities of the game and their practices are guided by "'strategies' which rarely have a true strategic intention as a principle" (1998: 81). Thus, while museum professionals dominate secondary educators in the museum/secondary school game, that is not necessarily their objective. On the other hand, secondary educators do not recognize their domination because they misrecognise the essentially oppressive basis of the symbolic power exercised by museums. Lack of acknowledgment of the symbolic violence occurring allows individuals in both fields to continue their practices unexamined and in doing so maintain and reproduce the social relations that determine their relationship.

This continuing phenomenon is a result of the forces that determine social order. One of Bourdieu's principal theoretical propositions about social order is that the ruling ideas in every age establish themselves as legitimate by concealing their basis in the power of the

ruling class. This social order is progressively inscribed in people's minds leading to the development of a "sense of ones place" that induces agents to adhere to the relations of social order (Bourdieu 1984: 471). Those who are dominated tend to attribute to themselves what the distribution attributes to them, defining themselves as the established order defines them. Being common to all minds such structures present every appearance of objective necessity.

Once a system of mechanisms has been constituted capable of objectively ensuring the reproduction of the established order by its own motion...the dominant class have only to let the system they dominate take its own course in order to exercise their domination (Bourdieu 1977: 190).

Fundamental to this process is the self-exclusion of the dominated. This process within the reproduction of the social order explains why secondary educators in this study engaged in a form of self exclusion from the museum field in the absence of any overt threat or coercion on the part of museums, and without any awareness of their self exclusion

Despite the domination secondary educators were experiencing, the generation of further recommendations, as shown in Table 4, indicated that they were seeking opportunities to exercise greater power in the relationship. Unfortunately the QVMAG was reluctant to provide such opportunities because previous attempts were not widely utilized. This situation illustrates a dilemma in the museum/secondary school relationship that has been previously identified (Stone 1992) and highlights the particular contribution of this study. Where previous research has provided few explanations of why secondary educators do not respond to initiatives designed to increase their access to museums, this research shows that such initiatives will not succeed until the underlying social barriers are acknowledged and addressed.

Table 4: Responses of Secondary Educators to Potential Museum Initiatives

POTENTIAL MUSEUM INITIATIVES	% OF POSITIVE RESPONSE
Workshops	79
Pre-service training	59
Classroom facilities	85
Appraisal	31
Integrated fieldwork	51
Additional suggestions listed in the "other" category	

Information service for teachers ie.briefing, lectures, worksheets etc (x5)

Traveling displays (x2)

Visits to school by museum staff (x4)

Student resource centre (x2)

Museum bus to collect students

Student developed displays

Upgrading of permanent collection

Music or background sound

Very advanced notice

Meetings with specific subject areas

Offer programs not available in schools

Raising of profile

Calendar of events

Addressing the Inequities

This research has identified how underlying social forces have lead to the reproduction of inequitable relations that discourage secondary educators from realizing the potential of museums as learning environments. Acknowledgment is crucial to addressing this issue because, as Bourdieu asserts, the ability of individuals to "un-make" or "re-make" the social world depends on "realistic knowledge of what it is and what they can do with it from the position they occupy within it" (1985: 734). He further states that the existence, form and direction of change depends both on the possibilities the system offers and on the balance of forces between social agents. Thus, examination of the relationship between museums and schools must attempt to render explicit what is taken for granted and provide an objective sociological account of how the two fields operate within social space. This must take into account that social reality exists both inside and outside of the agents involved. It must also uncover the idealist conceptions that regard access to museums as available to all classroom educators and competence in the museum field as an equally distributed gift of nature.

However, such change will not be easily achieved and efforts will not necessarily be viewed positively. In particular, considering the tradition of the museum/school relationship it could be predicted that any attempts to change the status quo will be met with opposition from the museum field. This is because as the dominating partner in the relationship museums have the greatest stake in the game.

This research has attempted to outline a major problem inhibiting the development of the learning relationship between museums and secondary schools. It does not address the

ways in which this problem can be solved and significant further examination is recommended.

Conclusion

This presentation has outlined how forces within social space have determined the practices of agents in the museum and secondary school fields. It has further shown that despite intentions to the contrary, museum professionals and secondary educators, respectively, are unknowingly complicit in reproducing the social order in ways that do not encourage school audiences to utilize museums. This has significant implications for the museum visiting opportunities of secondary students and for the future audiences of museums. While Bourdieu argues that a feel for the game is best achieved by being born into the game, he argues that introduction at school level can in some way compensate (1991, 1998). If schools do not realize their ability to provide this introduction, he asserts that they are sanctioning existing inequalities (Bourdieu and Darbel 1991).

The positive development of the relationship requires significant further examination and efforts need to be made to address the imbalance that currently devalues the perspectives and experience of secondary educators. While secondary educators may always be required to play the game in the museum field, further research should examine how the forces of social space can be utilized to gain entry, achieve inclusion and play the game with skill, knowledge and familiarity. Acknowledging their differences and becoming experts in each others fields will enable museums and secondary schools to genuinely combine their respective educational forces to create a powerful collaborative team to provide positive learning opportunities that encourage museum visiting among all elements of the population.

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