

From the Editor-in-Chief

Cynthia Robinson

With the launch of a new school year and the fall semester in full swing, it is appropriate that all 9 articles in this issue of *JME* focus on student learning in one form or another.

Museums' most traditional and common interaction with students — through curriculum related field trips — is explored in the guest-edited section. Guest Editor Carol Ng-He has assembled three responses to the Common Core State Standards. These articles all demonstrate the ability of museums to nimbly support the Standards' goal of helping students build twenty-first century skills to prepare them for college and work. In "Words & Pictures: Literacy, Art and Common Core Together," Juline A. Chevalier of the Nasher Museum of Art at Duke University describes how students who participated in a museum program scored higher in Common Core State Standard skills than did students in a control group. The process of developing new programs to meet the Standards led staff members at the Chicago History Museum to redirect their goals. In "Finding Common Ground with the Common Core," Heidi Moisan describes how the Standards united staff to focus on teaching skills, rather than content. Rounding out the trio is an article from a school art teacher, Chrissy Gray-Rodriguez, who discovered that the Common Core State Standards validated work she'd already been doing in her evolving work with museum resources. The three case studies will inspire and steer museum practitioners as they experiment with implementing the moving target of curriculum standards. Carol Ng-He's introduction to the guest-edited section provides a useful synopsis of the Standards and how they came to be.

From Australia comes a different focus on student-museum interactions — a study that looked at the value of iPads in transcending physical place to connect classrooms with museum visits. In "Connecting Classroom and Museum Learning with Mobile Devices," Damian Maher describes how he discovered

that even though the tablets were generally useful, supporting self-directed and social learning, they also can require more infrastructure than a museum can easily provide, and some students found them distracting.

Two articles in this issue focus upon college students in the dual roles of learners and teachers. In

“Teaching Students to Teach: A Case Study from the Yale University Art Gallery,” Elizabeth Manekin and Elizabeth Williams chart the development of a program that trains Yale undergraduates to give tours, resulting in deep learning and strong teaching skills. The student-led tours offer constructivist interactions to adult visitors, who relish the chance to converse and learn. In contrast to Yale’s commitment to a multi-year training program for student guides, Richard J. W. Harker and James Badger (“Traveling Exhibitions as Sites for Informal Learning: Assessing Different Strategies with Field Trips to Traveling Exhibitions at Non-museum Sites”) had less time and support to prepare to host a traveling exhibition at the University of North Georgia Dahlonega’s Library and Technology Center. Although they came up with a rich set of strategies for engaging students as both learners and teachers, they realized that they would have been better supported had the parent museum that created the travelling exhibition provided more substantive support for scaffolding visitors’ experiences in the travelling exhibition.

The issue of rural access to museum resources is tackled by Sara Hartman and Jennifer Hines-Bergmeier in “Building Connections: Strategies to Address Rurality and Accessibility Challenges.” They describe the ways in which the volunteer-driven museum has partnered with a variety of community agencies and organizations to provide a multifaceted and multidisciplinary experience for a wider age range of visitors than the typical children’s museum. Although K-12 visitors are just one of the audiences discussed, this article opens a much-needed discussion of how to serve residents of high-poverty rural areas.

The final article in this issue of *JME* grounds us in museum learning theory by examining three influential museum texts within a framework of shared principles. In “Application of Merrill’s First Principles of Instruction in a Museum Education Context,” Kari Ross Nelson explains how David Merrill, Professor Emeritus of Instructional Design at Utah State University, reviewed instructional design theories to distill common principles. She then shows how these common principles emerge in museum literature. Nelson’s analysis does a nice job of reconnecting museum learning theory back to more

generalized learning theory, and helps to unify different approaches by using Merrill's five principles.

2016 will be an exciting year for the *Journal of Museum Education*. We will inaugurate our new schedule of four issues per year. Guest edited sections will focus on training gallery educators to work with adult audiences, health and wellness in our communities, making history more relevant, and universities and museums working together. As always, the guest-edited sections will be complemented by a variety of other articles.

About the Editor

Cynthia Robinson is the director of museum studies at Tufts University. She spent 25 years working in and with museums and has extensive experience in developing programs, curricula and exhibitions, as well as in museum management and administration.