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Guidance for guiding

Professionalization of guides in museums of art and history

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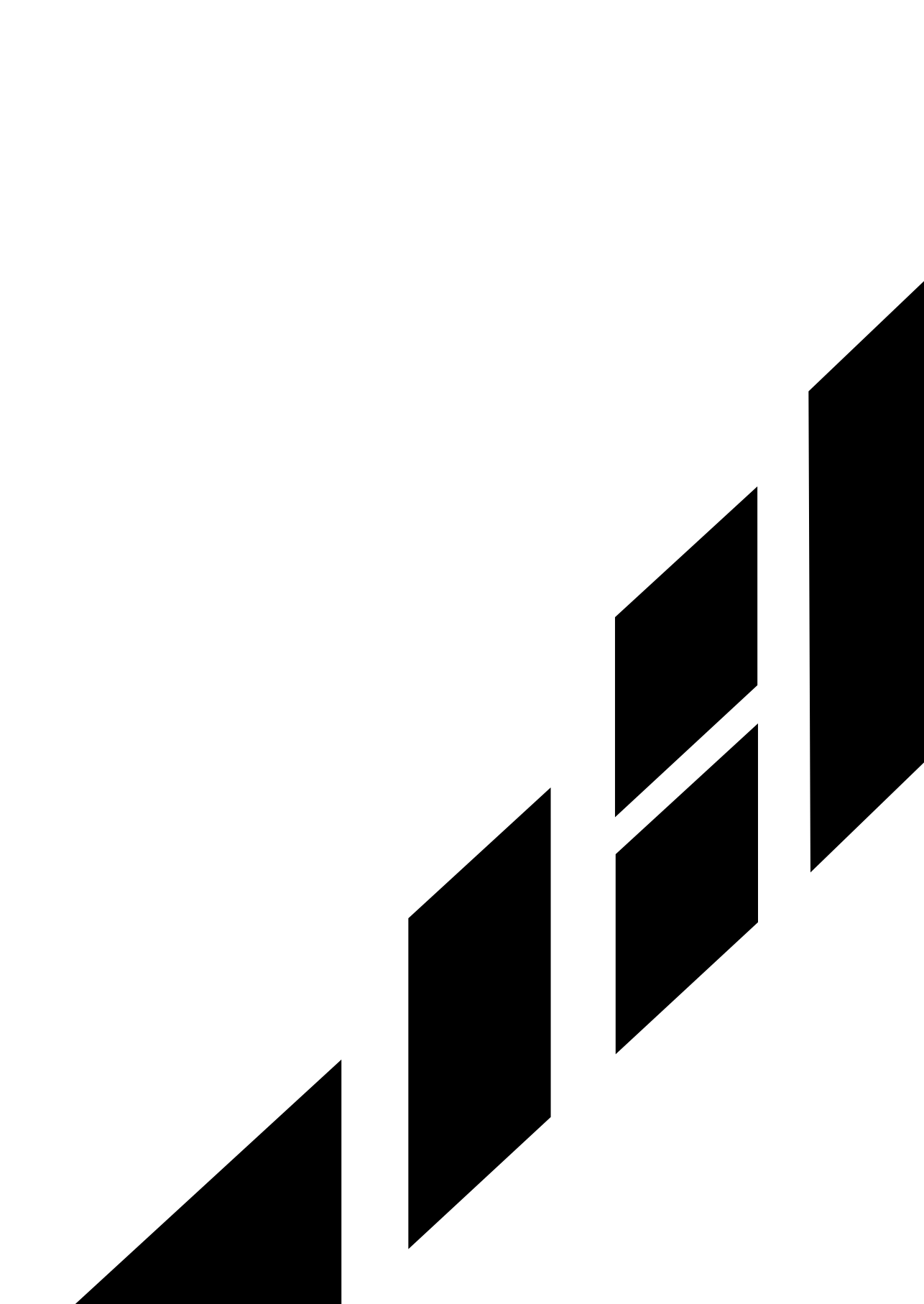
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CHAPTER

6

Summary, general conclusions
and discussion

While performing research for this dissertation, we conducted four studies to shed more light on the practices of museum guides and ways that can help to further professionalize their craft. This endeavor led to the following overarching question of the project: *How can we define competencies of museum guides in art museums and history museums, and how can we foster professional development?*

Below, we discuss the main findings of this dissertation, present the conclusions, explain the theoretical and practical relevance of the findings, and discuss the limitations of this study. We will conclude with suggestions for further research.

SUMMARY

In Chapter 2, we examined which learning outcomes may be suitable to aim for during guided tours with school groups in art museums and history museums. When a visit occurs in the context of a school fieldtrip, the tour often is connected to the school curriculum and aims to achieve specific learning outcomes. Learning in museums generally centers on the museum objects. These authentic objects are often the main reason for teachers to visit the museum (Wright-Maley, Grenier, & Marcus, 2013) and offer many chances for learning. A current trend in tour guiding, at least in the Netherlands, is that tours are interactive and the group engages in a dialectic process of meaning-making while touching objects, listening, and engaging in small exercises such as drawing in the style of a particular painter.

In reviewing the literature, we found few empirical studies on the learning outcomes of a guided tour visit. In one, for example, we found evidence of the development of tolerance, critical thinking, historical empathy, and interest in art during a guided tour of an art museum (Greene et al., 2014). Based on a review of the literature, an expert panel meeting, and an expert questionnaire, we created two lists of possible learning outcomes of a guided tour of art (20 outcomes) and history museums (12 outcomes). The outcomes were divided into five subcategories: (a) affective, (b) attitudes and values, (c) identity, (d) knowledge and understanding, and (e) skills. Five of the learning outcomes were validated as suitable for both art and history museums. The main goals for which guides strive in both types of museums were often affective ones; for example, guides sought to give children an enjoyable experience that

stirred their interest in art or history and tried to foster enthusiasm for a return visit. Besides these more affective goals, a museum tour allows visitors to acquire knowledge, to further develop certain skillsets, to change or develop attitudes, and to learn about themselves, others, and the world around them.

The two lists of learning outcomes can help educators and guides to design guided tour programs and researchers to set up empirical studies on the learning outcomes of a guided tour. The insights about the museum as a learning environment and the two lists were used as input for the second study of this dissertation.

In Study 2, which we reported on in Chapter 3, we investigated which competencies museum guides need in order to give tours to primary and secondary school students in art museums and history museums. Scientific research on the practices of museum guides is scarce—even more so for art and history museums. The existing research focuses on volunteers in art museums (Bleick, 1979; Neill, 2010), educators (guides) in science museums (Tran & King, 2007), or educators in the broader field of cultural education (Albertijn & Hoefnagels, 2012). In general, the competencies put forth in the available literature on the role of museum guides stress the importance of people skills, communication skills, content knowledge, and pedagogical competencies (e.g., Albertijn & Hoefnagels, 2012; Bleick, 1979; Neill, 2010; Tran & King, 2007). As noted, teaching in art museums and history museums focuses on (authentic) objects. However, a specific description of the pedagogical competencies that focuses on teaching with these objects was often missing. Based on a review of the literature as well as interviews with 16 museum guides and the three heads of education at the partnering museums, we developed a preliminary draft of competencies.

Using the Delphi techn, 26 experts (12 educators, nine guides, and five teacher educators) rated the preliminary draft of competencies on a five-point Likert scale on two criteria: (a) the relevance of the competency and (b) clearness and completeness of the formulation. In two rounds, raters found consensus on 45 competencies, organized into four areas: (a) handling the group within the museum environment, (b) communication skills, (c) knowledge and pedagogy, and (d) professionalism. The competencies were determined to be relevant for guides in both art and history museums—especially the knowledge and pedagogy category focuses on the particular pedagogical competencies, which help guides to teach with ob-

jects in art museums and history museums. Three of the competencies specifically focus on teaching with objects: *contextualizing objects*, *using objects as a window*, and *using objects for critical analyses*. In most of the competencies, the actions of the guides were described in relation to the objects. For example, the *storytelling* competency is explained as “the museum guide is capable of telling stories in relation to an object in an engaging way.” The fourth category of our competency profile is dedicated to professionalism. Besides competencies focusing on the collaboration with other people on the museum floor, four competencies are related to professional development.

In Study 3, discussed in Chapter 4, we investigated two professionalization tools used during post-observation conversations between museum guides and educators. We used the list of competencies to develop two tools: a self-evaluation tool for museum guides and an observation tool that museum educators may use to evaluate museum guides as they conduct their guided tours. Both instruments list the 45 competencies, organized into the four areas of competence identified in Study 2. Fourteen guides were asked to rate their performance on these competencies on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (*insufficient*) to 5 (*excellent*), and to indicate one or two strengths and points in need of improvement for each of the four main areas of competence. Eight museum educators used the observation tool to evaluate the performance of a museum guide. The observation tool was organized in a similar manner as the self-evaluation and, thus, consisted of the four categories, 45 competencies, and questions regarding strengths and points for improvement. In Chapter 4, we discussed an intervention in the three museums.

Museum guides are generally observed once a year, which is often followed by a post-observation conversation. In our study, the educators observed two tours: one for students in primary education and one for students in secondary education. Beforehand, the museum guide completed a self-evaluation based on her or his general performance. Instead of using the observations of the museum educator as the starting point for the post-observation conversation, we asked participants to use the guide’s self-evaluation to begin the conversation. The educator did not read the document in advance. Afterwards, we interviewed all participants about their perceptions regarding the instruments and the intervention, and we further analyzed seven conversations to investigate each participant’s contribution. Our analysis of the interviews

showed that the participants evaluated the conversations in our study as more equally balanced when we compared supervisor-driven conversations with the ones incited by the self-assessment completed by the supervisee. The museum guides also indicated that they felt more ownership over their own professional development. Furthermore, both groups of participants indicated that the list of competencies served as a common language and (more or less) as an objective standard about what tour guiding entails. Although some participants considered the paperwork to be distracting, they also remarked that the instruments helped to structure the conversation. Analysis of the recordings confirmed the picture painted by the participants. Museum guides introduced most topics in the conversations, and in five of the seven conversations that we analyzed, the guides introduced most of the discussed topics, which is an indication that the guides had a big influence on the conversation's content.

In Chapter 5, we presented the findings of two case studies on two professional learning communities (PLCs) consisting of student teachers, museum guides, a museum educator, and a teacher educator. In these case studies, we investigated how and to what extent a PLC consisting of student teachers and museum and teaching professionals fosters professional development. The results of the two PLCs were mixed: In the art group, the participants were predominantly positive, whereas most participants in the history group were not satisfied by the collaboration or the outcomes. Based on a review of PLCs (Stoll, Bolam, McMahon, Wallace, & Thomas, 2006) and a study by Prenger, Poortman, & Handelzalts (2018), we considered seven characteristics for an effective PLC: (1) shared goal and vision, (2) collective responsibility, (3) shared inquiry, (4) collaboration, (5) group and individual learning, (6) trust, and (7) leadership. Some of these appeared to play an important role in our PLCs—the shared goal of which was to design and test pedagogical approaches. However, most of the responsibility rested on the shoulders of the students, which caused them some stress. Because participants came from different institutes, boundaries had to be crossed. For example, the groups worked hard to find a common language that bridged the practice-orientated language of museum professionals and the more theoretical language used by the university participants. The history group struggled with this boundary; this led to misunderstanding and frustration, which obstructed the shared inquiry. Two additional reasons were

the lack of (theoretical) input from the students and a learning environment that was perceived as unsafe.

In contrast, students in the art group indicated that their learning environment was safe, which helped everyone to feel at ease. Just like the history students, the art students hesitated at first to contribute to the discussions and to give their opinions. However, the art students were better equipped to explain their ideas and to observe tours in order to come up with ideas. This, combined with the safe learning environment, helped the group to engage in a shared inquiry. Another possible explanation for the difference between the two groups could be that the art group was established via a selection process—out of the five students who applied for the project, three were selected based on their motivation and track record at the university. Only three students applied for the history group, which made selection based on motivation impossible. Moreover, the art students expressed their ambition to work in a museum after university, which is indicative of their strong intrinsic motivation to succeed in the museum project.

The reported learning value differed for the participants. The guides mainly learned because they were stimulated to explain their practices and to reflect upon them. The students indicated that they learned a lot about the practices of museum guides and educators, such as how to use the museum for teaching, and that they got insights into their own teaching styles.

CONCLUSIONS

The overarching question of this dissertation was how can we define competencies of museum guides in art museums and history museums, and how can we foster professional development?

The first study on the learning outcomes helped to establish a grasp on the museum as a learning and teaching environment and served as a stepping stone towards a definition of the competencies museum guides need, which was presented in Study 2.

The profession of a guide entails many different competencies. Four main categories of competence were identified: (a) handling the group within the museum environment, (b) communication skills, (c) knowledge and pedagogy, and (d) professionalism. As noted throughout this dissertation, teaching with objects is central in art and history museums; there-

fore, competencies related to this are key in the knowledge and pedagogy category. One of the competencies seemed to imbue a lot of the other competencies. Over the past four years, I engaged in conversations with novice museum guides, experienced guides, guides who work in one museum, guides who work in 10 museums, guides who combine tour guiding with teaching, guides who are artists, or guides who ventured into entrepreneurship. After so many different conversations, all conducted within the context of this study (e.g., interviews, informal chats, post-observation conversations, and conversations in the PLC), one term kept popping up: flexibility.

Flexibility appeared to be key in the museum guide profession, and not simply because they represent a flexible workforce for the cultural sector. A competent museum guide is capable of adjusting the tour to the needs of the visitors, to be responsive to what Doering and Pekarik (1996) call the “entrance narrative” of the visitor. Museum guides often give tours in several museums and guide different groups every hour, such as school children, business professionals, or heterogeneous groups such as families or tourists from different countries. Therefore, guides need to adjust their language, questions, stories, and their use of knowledge to each and every group. Museums are also dynamic environments; for example, objects can be replaced or other visitors and guides wander around. All of this demands flexibility from the guides.

The aim of this study was to provide museum education professionals (and volunteers) a frame of reference to talk about their profession. The most important outcome of this project, therefore, is the development of tools and approaches that can foster a common language for museum guides and museum educators. These tools include a list of learning outcomes, a profile of competencies, a self-evaluation instrument, and an observation instrument that can be used in post-observation conversations. Compiling a list of learning outcomes makes it possible to talk about the desired and possible learning outcomes of a guided tour program. In Study 3, we investigated post-observation conversations between museum guides and educators. Participants indicated that the list of competencies—used in the self-evaluation and observation tools—served as an *objective standard* to talk about their profession. The list helped them to find common ground and pinpoint strengths and points in need of improvement, which is the starting point for professional growth.

Besides these conversations regarding professional development, we investigated the value of the collaboration between student teachers of art and history and museum guides. Study 4 demonstrated that under the right circumstances (e.g., motivated students, a safe learning environment, and a clear assignment) museum guides and students can learn from and with each other. During this process of collaboration, it was especially important to find a common language that could act as a bridge between the more theoretical language of the university participants and the more practice-oriented language of the museum professionals. The conversations about specific teaching methods in the museum and the conversations relating these methods to educational theories were highly valued in the collaborations.

DISCUSSION

Below, we expound on the scientific and practical relevance of the studies, give suggestions for museum practice, discuss the limitations of these studies, and conclude by giving suggestions for further research.

Scientific Relevance

Many scholars in the field of museum education have called for research on learning and teaching in museums and, more specifically, on teaching and learning in the context of a guided tour in art and history museums (Best, 2012; Falk & Dierking, 1992, 2013; Neill, 2010). Most research on museum education focuses on science museums or learning centers (Andre, Durksen, & Volman, 2016) or on the training of volunteer museum guides (Neill, 2010). Meanwhile, research on the practices of professional museum guides has been neglected so far. The four studies that are part of this dissertation help to fill this research gap by focusing on art museums and history museums as learning and teaching environments and on the professionalization of paid museum guides.

First, this dissertation provides an overview of the characteristics of learning in museums and the learning outcomes that are suitable to work toward during a guided tour in art and history museums. The lists of learning outcomes could also help researchers to develop evaluation tools to empirically study the outcomes of a guided tour. Research on this is still very scarce.

Second, this dissertation presents a profile of the competencies museum guides need in order to meet the learning outcomes of guided tours in art and history museums. A competency profile based on scientific research was lacking in the field of art and history museum education. Teacher competency profiles already describe pedagogical and communication skills; however, because the teaching context of museums is different, these profiles were not sufficient for our purposes. In our study, we tailor made a profile for teaching in art museums and history museums, specifically by adding competencies related to teaching with objects in the museum environment.

Third, the study on post-observation conversations confirmed some of the findings in other research. As Sergiovanni and Starratt (2002) suggested, the profile of competencies helped to structure the conversations and helped participants to find a common language. Our findings show that the guides were involved in the conversations, which was deemed an important factor for successful conversations (e.g., Tang & Chow, 2007; Waring, 2017). Museum guides experienced more ownership over their learning process and some guides (as noted by Deci & Ryan, 2000) reported that they are more likely to change their behavior when the insights stem from their own reflections. Several researchers highlight the importance of self-reflection in post-observation conversations (Husu, Patrikainen, & Toom, 2007; Ovando & Harris, 1993; Walsh, 2011, 2013) or for professional development in general (Shulman, 1987), which was directly linked to the self-evaluation according to the participants. As explained by Orland-Barak (2006), the supervisor's role as a cothinker, a source of information, and an evaluator was appreciated by the guides.

In Study 4, we responded to the demand for studies that explore the value of collaboration between teachers and museum education professionals (Baron, Woyshner, & Haberkern, 2014) and for research on (heterogeneous) PLCs (Chapman & Muijs, 2014; Hofman & Dijkstra, 2010). We found that trust and an open attitude were important factors for the success of the collaboration and the shared inquiry. In line with theories on boundary crossing (e.g., Akkerman & Bakker, 2011), we found that the boundaries between the two groups of participants triggered a negotiation of meaning. Participants sought to find a common language, which was challenging but also offered chances for learning because it involved processes of self-explanation and a shared inquiry. Students' motivations also played a crucial role in the two PLCs. For both groups

of students, part of the motivation to succeed was based on wanting to graduate. However, it appeared that students in the art PLC enjoyed a greater degree of intrinsic motivation; this perhaps was explained by their shared goal of pursuing a career in museum education. As indicated by Damşa and Nerland (2016), inquiry activities can be difficult for students. In the two PLCs, students indicated that they were cautious to share their ideas because they felt they had nothing to offer to the professional museum guides and educators. In PLCs it is, therefore, essential that all participants feel free and are encouraged to share their ideas. This can be difficult when participants, for example, are at different stages in their professional careers.

Practical Relevance

This project was initiated in collaboration with three museums, meaning the museum education professionals themselves (at least in part) directed the project — compared to most museum education research, which is largely driven by political forces and institutional leaders (Kristinsdóttir, 2017). The museum representatives asked concrete questions about learning and teaching in art museums and history museums: What makes a good tour? What makes a good museum guide? Incorporating these questions into the core of the inquiry for this dissertation ensure that its results serve the field of museum education in several ways.

First, the two lists of learning outcomes help educators and guides to develop their programs. The outcomes can be a starting point to help define the specific goals of the museum tour program and can also be used as an evaluation tool. Second, the competency profile and the self-evaluation and observation instruments are tools that museum educators and guides may employ to foster the development of a common language, which would facilitate communication within the profession. Furthermore, these tools can help museums and guides to establish an overview of the competencies that are needed when giving tours to school groups and can help museums in their selection process and in the development of training programs. For example, more museums could use the competency profile in their vacancy descriptions and selection processes. For museum guides themselves, the list can serve as a frame of reference; the list allows novice museum guides to be confident about what is expected of them, and

experienced guides can use the list to renew their focus and to evaluate whether they possess the desired competencies. The evaluation tools and post-observation conversation format can help to structure these conversations between guides and educators in order to give guides more ownership of their professional growth and to engage in the conversations confidently. In a survey study of over 300 museums from 45 countries, Zbucnea (2013) found that most museums do not encourage professional development. The tools developed in this dissertation could guide museum administrators to establish professional development trajectories.

Third, this project is an example of a collaboration between the university and museums. Schools, universities, and museums share the responsibility to teach students about art and history. Collaboration between these institutes can be valuable, for example, in order to adjust tour programs to the needs of the children. Furthermore, this research project demonstrates that under the right circumstances museum guides and student teachers can learn from each other's approaches and knowledge. This collaborative environment could help to improve teaching in museums, schools, and universities.

This dissertation also demonstrates that the museum guiding profession entails a complex set of competencies. Based on our research and the research of others (e.g., Tran, 2008), we advise museums to involve museum guides in the development of programs, which will not only foster guides' professional development but will also help the educational department to improve their tours by using the guides' knowledge and experience. Doing so may help to avoid a number of problems regarding the tour-guiding field as identified by Tran (2008). Tran explained that the work of museum educators [guides] is easily divided into developing and delivering, which removes autonomy from a significant number of employees and, in so doing, diminishes their ability to act as professionals. Tran further explained that outsourcing work to freelance individuals and to guides who did not pursue continuing education within the field also devalues the work of museum guides by suggesting that professional experience and qualifications are not necessary requirements. In some museums the knowledge of the guides is already used to improve programs. Over the course of my research, I found that museums frequently employ freelance professional guides to write programs, or they organize brainstorming sessions in order to get guides' feedback or input on a specific program.

A significant step towards addressing these issues and promoting the professionalization of tour guiding would be to develop and adopt a certification system. Currently in the Netherlands, no specific university (of applied science) track exists for museum guides or educators, and guides are not required to complete any certification program in order to give tours. This stands in contrast to France and Italy, for example. The results of this study may be used to develop a university (of applied science) program that focuses on museum education and that prepares certified museum guides. In this, collaboration with teacher training programs could be valuable because for both teachers and guides the main goal is to facilitate children's learning experience. Indeed, many student teachers in the art education program already find jobs in museums or work as guides. Creating a formalized museum guide education program could also reinforce the position of museum guides (in the labor market).

Last, as stated in Chapter 3 and 4, we advise museums to adjust the tools to their own specific museum context and needs. Each museum has its own particularities and strives for different educational goals. As noted by Nerland and Karseth (2015), standards are important for professional work, but it is also important that (in our case) the competency profile does not limit the space of action for guides in their daily tours.

Limitations of the Studies

In designing the four studies, many choices were made about the data collection, the selection of participants, and the focus of the dissertation. Below, we discuss some of the choices and reflect on the limitations and their impact on our findings.

First, in Study 1, we asked experts to evaluate whether the learning outcomes that we found in the literature were suitable for a guided tour program. Empirical evidence exists for some of the learning outcomes, such as the development of tolerance, knowledge gain, and the maturation of critical thinking skills. However, we did not empirically study these outcomes ourselves. Moreover, as noted in Chapter 2, there is an ongoing discussion about the desirability of formulating learning outcomes in the field of museum education. Particularly in realm of art museum education, some scholars argue that the outcomes of a museum visit should not be specified because it denies the complexity of learning (e.g., Biesta, 2015;

Hussey & Smith, 2002). For example, Anderson, Piscitelli, Weier, Everett, and Taylor (2002) noted that research shows that each child's experience and learning during a museum visit is highly individual, even while they engage in the same program as their classmates. Furthermore, Kristinsdóttir (2017) described a change "from using the word museum 'education' to 'learning,' emphasizing the learner over the teacher 'experience' and the open-endedness of an outcome, and learning as 'performance' or 'meaning-making'" (p. 3). Learning is complex and based on the individual and each context demands different competencies and approaches. Nevertheless, it is helpful to formulate learning aims, outcomes, or goals because learning is more effective when it is directed by clear goals (Burnham & Kai-Kee, 2011). In line with Falk and Dierking (2013), we acknowledge that learning is a cumulative process that does not begin or end in the museum. For this reason, we agree with researchers who state that learning outcomes improve when the museum visit is well embedded in the curriculum (Burchenal & Grohe, 2007; Wright-Maley, Grenier, & Marcus, 2014). Therefore, learning in the museum should build upon prior knowledge and experiences, and museums and schools should closely collaborate to optimize the learning experience. In developing the two lists of learning outcomes, our intention was not to supply a tool that strengthens the authoritative guidance in the museum. Instead, we seek to provide a scaffold that can help guides and educators to think about their tour program and to help museum educators and school teachers to develop a common language.

Second, although one of the three museums in our study also houses historical objects and features historical exhibitions, the three are predominantly art museums. The competency profile, developed in Study 2, consists of a general description of competencies that are needed to give tours in art and history museums, but competencies in the categories *handling the group within the museum environment*, *communication skills*, and *professionalism* are also relevant in other types of museums. We found these competencies to be important for guides in both art and history museums, but there are differences between and within these two museum types. For example, a museum of ancient history demands a different approach than a museum that houses a collection of contemporary art. For this reason, museums could specify what competencies are relevant for their museum guides and compile a selection that matches the features of their museum. For example, the pedagogical competency "the guide can use an

object as a window to a historical period or event” may be more relevant for history museum guides than guides in contemporary art museums. Another example, “the guide is capable of dealing with the business of the museum,” is only relevant for museums guides who encounter this issue. Because the descriptions of the competencies are quite generic, museums could add specific pedagogical approaches to the competency descriptions. For example, the competency *stimulate students to look carefully* could be supplemented by giving examples, such as Visible Thinking routines or Visual Thinking Strategies.

Third, the focus in this dissertation was on professional museum guides, which is why we collaborated with three big museums that employ professional guides. These museums have a direct demonstrable interest in obtaining a validated overview of the competencies guides should possess in order to evaluate their performance. In reality, few museums have full educational departments, and most are obliged to rely on volunteers to provide tours. The majority of the museum guides in the Netherlands are volunteers. Because we only included professional guides, the competencies are not based on what volunteers consider relevant competencies. Many museums lack specific educators who regularly engage in post-observation conversations with their guides. Ideally, we would have discovered whether, for example, a museum director or curator could use the tools to facilitate conversation with a volunteer or whether the use of the self-evaluation is in itself valuable to the guide. Furthermore, we do not know whether volunteers can work with the tool. For volunteers and freelancers, being observed and evaluated is often a stressful event (see also Patton in Neill, 2010). Most volunteers give tours in their spare time because they love the institution or simply because they like to give tours. Being observed and asked to fill out a lengthy self-evaluation tool based on 45 competencies might overwhelm volunteers, as it does professionals. Based on reactions from the field, however, museums that work with volunteers are looking for ways to “professionalize” their guided visits. Therefore, a profile of competencies for museum guides may be relevant for volunteers as well. In both cases, it could (at the very least) serve as a frame of reference. As noted above, museums should select the competencies that are the most important for their institution, suited to their situation, and that are in line with the institution’s intended outcomes.

Fourth, the main data-collection method consisted of interviews with museum guides and educators—I conducted the interviews. Because these interviews were not blind, it is possible that participants answered in a social desirable way. For example, in Study 3 and 4, participants evaluated instruments and a professional development program, both of which we developed. Although guides and educators mostly evaluated the tools positively, some also shared their thoughts on limitations and improvements. For example, the questionnaire requires a great deal of a participant's time, which made one of the guides wonder whether it was worth the investment. Others asked if the tool could be downsized. In the Study 4, participants of the history PLC were critical of the setup of the collaboration and the outcomes of the project, so it is reasonable to assume that the participants were honest in their responses. We used pseudonyms in order to ensure the participants' anonymity. Nevertheless, future researchers could also use additional surveys to increase anonymity. Another issue was that our selection depended on whether participants were employed by our partnering museums. We conducted all but one of the interviews with guides or educators who were either employed by or freelancing for the partnering museums—three of the largest museums located in Amsterdam, the capital city of the Netherlands. However, in the Delphi study, museum education experts from across the entirety of the Netherlands validated the profile of competencies, and most of the participating guides worked in several museums not affiliated with the project.

Another limitation related to the data collection in Study 3. We lacked a premeasurement or a control group, in which participants engaged in post-observation conversations without the instruments. Therefore, our information about the “traditional” conversations stemmed solely from the interviews with the participants. In this study, we also did not analyze the “quality” of the interaction. We coded the conversations based on the criterion of whether a topic was discussed and set the benchmark at more than two exchanges. However, we found large differences between the topics that were coded as “discussed”; some topics were discussed elaborately, whereas others were only touched upon shortly. Based on the interviews and the analyses of the conversations, however, we can still conclude that a majority of the conversations were balanced equally.

Finally, we developed the competency profile for guides who give tours to school groups. Such groups are often more or less homogenous, compared to tours given to tourists and families. Some competencies needed for school children are possibly less relevant or even irrelevant for other groups, such as *collaborating with teachers* and *knowledge of the curriculum*. Most competencies (e.g., *flexibility*, *creating a safe learning environment*, *creating a current thread*, or *coping with resistance*) are germane to all sorts of groups, depending on the situation, and are often used differently for each group or moment. Future researchers could further specify the competency profile for each individual group.

Suggestions for Further Research

Based on the findings from our studies and the identified limitations, we present some suggestions for further research below. First, the two lists of learning outcomes, as presented in Chapter 2, could be used to design studies that explore whether children really acquire the intended knowledge; further develop their skills; learn about themselves, others, and the world; or enjoy themselves. Unfortunately, instruments to “measure” children’s learning and experiences in museums are still scarce, especially on a large scale. Greene et al. (2014) used paper and pencil knowledge tests and short essay questions. Several researchers have used interviews (e.g., Anderson, Piscitelli, Weier, Everett, & Taylor, 2002; Wickens, 2012). Savenije, Van Boxtel, and Grever (2014) used interviews, observations, and a questionnaire. Given this lack, we call for future researchers to develop instruments in order to study the diverse range of learning experiences of museum visitors.

Second, and related to the suggestion above, the lists of learning outcomes could also be used to further specify the pedagogical competencies that museum guides need in order to facilitate student learning towards these goals. For example, if the aim is that children learn to critically analyze representations of the past, future studies could focus on the steps that a museum guide should undertake to reach this goal and could determine the effects of specific pedagogies on the children’s learning and experiences.

Third, more research (similar to the research conducted in education and on teachers) should focus on the professional development of museum guides and factors that influence this development. How do professional museum guides de-

velop from novices to experts? Grenier (2009) researched this question with respect to volunteer guides. What are effective ways for developing competencies? A claim made by Tran (2008), does involvement in the development of tour programs foster guides' professional growth? The instruments from Study 3 can also be used to research the lasting effects of post-observation conversations, the future practices and the guides' behavioral changes, for example, by video recorded observations of the guide or the guide's self-reports. Research on these questions could further illuminate the profession and professional development of museum guides.

Fourth, in Study 3, the performance of the guides was evaluated by the guides themselves and by their supervisors. Because museums are increasingly responsive to the input of the visitor, visiting teachers, children, and students could contribute by filling out evaluations. Based on the list of competencies, a selection could be made that gives the teacher and school children the chance to give feedback. For example, by using an online application, children could rate the guide on 10 competencies. In turn, the guides can use this information to reflect on their practices or to spark a post-observation conversation with a museum educator. It could also be interesting to further explore the content of the conversations and (as noted in the Limitations of the studies section) the "quality" of the interaction. A future study could focus more on the content and "quality" of the interaction. For example, the coding could be directed at the use of specific language used in tour guiding (e.g., tour goals, key concepts of the competency profile, etc.), the extent to which participants build on joint reasoning, or whether new examples stemming from the guide's or educator's experiences are used in the conversations. Another key factor in post-observation conversations is the nonverbal communication between the participants. Further exploring the effects of nonverbal cues during such conversations could lend more insights into the interaction and understanding between the participants. As noted in the Limitations of the studies section, future research could compare conversations in which the instruments are used with conversations based on the observations of the educator.

Finally, in our study on PLCs, the collaboration between the students and the museum guides lasted for 5 months. This was in part because the students' university track only lasts 12 months. Future studies could explore longer collaborations, for instance, between school teachers and museum education

professionals. In order to investigate whether PLCs engender behavioral change, participants could be followed for a longer period. For example, they could be asked to keep learning diaries or could be observed during lessons or tours. In our PLCs, the students assumed the largest share of the work, but it would be interesting to explore whether the PLC would function differently, and whether the outcomes would be altered, if the workload were more evenly distributed. Finally, future researchers could develop a PLC strictly comprised of museum guides and educators (either from one museum or from a selection of museums). Doing so may allow participants to work collaboratively on a specific competency or pedagogy in order to apply it in their own museum. This is especially relevant because most guides work in more than one museum and may need to adjust their approach to the different museum environments.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

As noted by Kristinsdóttir (2017), “museum education is still an occupation in the process of professional development” (p. 3). Overall, this dissertation contributes to the professionalization of the field in several ways. In general, it adds to the knowledge about learning and teaching in art museums and history museums in the context of a guided tour. More specifically, it provides the first competency profile for professional museum guides of art and history museums that is based on theoretical and empirical research. Furthermore, the dissertation provides tools for museum guides to reflect on their practices and insights into the value of self-reflection and post-observation conversations, which could foster the development of a common language. Finally, we demonstrated the importance of PLCs in which museum guides and student teachers collaboratively design pedagogical approaches for guided tour programs.