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## Curriculum-Making and the Museum Mosaic

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An interpretive approach is used to gain insight into the educational function of museums in curriculum-making terms. Through interviews, direct observation of exhibit development planning and documentary analysis, the valued educational practices, deliberative processes and decisions of museum workers are examined across three museum settings. Sites studied include: The Gibson House, a living history site; "Viewpoints", the Adult Programs Department 1987 exhibition at the Art Gallery of Ontario; the Hall of Technology at the Ontario Science Centre.

Although the language used by museum workers to describe their practices is unlike professional curriculum planning discourse, the research suggests that planning for public education has features typical of a curriculum-making process. There is an attempt to bring together potential learners and specific subject matter towards a particular valued end. Museum workers are involved in a means-end deliberation process during their planning for the visitor experience. Which curricular-related features are paid attention to is largely determined by the expertise of the individuals who are included in the deliberation process.

Educational practice most valued across settings attempts to provide "edutainment" for visitors with more of an expectation for affective, personally meaningful outcomes than for fact retention. Each museum is responsive to its market, packaging objects and phenomena as products which would satisfy its consumers. The living history museum looks to stories of a past era for personal meaning. The science museum and contemporary art exhibition use sophisticated communication technologies for an audience accustomed to the fast-paced, dynamic images of T. V., video, film and computers.

Observations and interviews of museum visitors provided clues to the reactions of more expert and novice visitors. Values held by museum workers are based more on personal feelings about how and what a visitor might learn than on different strategies that novice or expert visitors may need to learn. Across sites, staff responsible for public education are questioning the lack of involvement of the public educator during the production of environments to be experienced by casual visitors.

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