©Muriel Luderowski, Docent
©Linda Goossens, Volunteer Guides Programme Officer
The Sphere of Co-Learning: Mentor and Student-Guide in a Collaborative Relationship

A Case Study about Mentor’s Experience
How to become a qualified docent at the MMFA?
The final goal is:
To create and curate a personal written scenario
To give a tour based on the scenario
Step 1
May-June
Selection of Candidates (max 14)

- Attend the MMFA’s information session and confirm the interest online

- Following the review of applications, selected candidates are contacted for an interview (June)

- Following the interview, selected candidates are notified by phone (July)

- The selected candidates register for the MMFA’s Training Program
Profile of a MMFA Docent

**Love** art and the MMFA’s collections meeting people

**Enjoy** learning, studying and doing research teamwork

**Be** bilingual: to master spoken and written French enthusiastic, dynamic, and flexible a good listener

**Have** good communication skills a sense of humour empathy
Step 2
Fall (September to December)
Docent’s Initial Training

*Becoming a Museum Guide* led by Concordia University (Center for Continuing Education)

*Dialogic Approach Seminar*

Course given by a Concordia University PhD candidate, former MMFA Museum Educator

The class includes **3 main topics:**
- review of current museum issues
- learning the dialogic approach
- introduction to the written scenario of a museum tour
Step 3
Winter (January to May)
Docent’s In-House Training

**Gallery Time and Art History Course taught by MMFA Staff**

10 full-day training sessions taught by Linda Goossens, *Educational Programmes Officer-Volunteer Guides*, and selected museum staff

The class includes **2 main topics:**
- Art History overview within the context of the MMFA’s collection
- In-gallery activities: practice key didactic skills
Mentoring Provided by Experienced Docents

The mentor helps the mentee develop necessary competencies and skills to become a docent

The focus of the mentoring program is to foster autonomy, and to develop the self-confidence of future docents

An activity meeting with mentees and mentors (twinning) takes place in January
Step 4
Spring (May)
Video Recording of the guided tour and written scenario hand-in

- The mentee must give a guided tour of 45 minutes with a group of unknown (to her/him) participants (May)

- The visit is the «live version» of the scenario which was created by the mentee.

- These two elements (visit and scenario) are evaluated in order to become a qualified docent at the MMFA.
Step 5
Summer (June-July)
Evaluation Process

- Each video is reviewed by both the Concordia University instructor and Linda Goossens. An evaluation rubric is used to assess the mentee’s skills and abilities observed during the tour.

- A meeting with Linda Goossens takes place to discuss the video and the quality of the scenario (June or July).

- At the conclusion of the process, if the mentees meet the requirements of the MMFA, they are accepted as «Qualified Docent». 
Our Case Study: The Mentors’ Experience
A few words about a mentor’s personal experience...
Methodology

- 5 basic questions were prepared by Linda and Muriel
- 12 volunteer mentors were interviewed by Muriel. Their names stay confidential
- Answers were hand-noted during the interview or audio-recorded by Muriel
- Answers were transcribed on a document by Muriel
- Answers were analyzed and classified in 4 categories by Linda and Muriel
- A selection of answers, respecting the ratio for each category, has been transcribed in this presentation
Questions Asked to Mentors

1. Why be a mentor?
2. What do you wish to contribute as an experienced docent?
3. What do you hope to get out of the mentoring experience?
4. What do you want to learn from your relationship with your mentee?
5. What strategies do you use to help the mentee in the training process?
Answers: 4 categories

- Share / Transmit Knowledge and Skills
- Help Integration Within the MMFA
- Meet a New Person Within The Museum
- Learn from a New Relationship
Answers to Question 1:
*Why be a mentor?*

1. Help new guides integrate the museum institution
2. Share knowledge of MMFA’s collections
3. Invite mentee to share ideas with mentor
4. Give back to mentee support I received from my mentor(s)
5. Help with implementation of dialogic approach
6. Help mentee build confidence
7. Have an opportunity to share my knowledge
8. Learn from mentee and enrich myself
9. Create a bond with new guides
10. Develop mentee’s ability to communicate art with passion
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Answers to Question 2: What do you wish to Contribute as a Docent?

1. Assist in mentee’s build-up of a guided tour scenario
2. Coach mentee how to place art in its proper context
3. Coach mentee how to effectively collect information
4. Help mentee in their discovery of new artworks, new content
5. Teach mentee how to distill info, how to select research found
6. Teach mentee how to build a well-balanced scenario
7. Teach mentee the importance of linkages between artworks
8. Pass on important facts about the MMFA and its philosophy
9. Create an expanded community of working docents
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Answers to Question 3:
What do you hope to get out from the mentoring experience?

1. Point the way in building a tour scenario gives me satisfaction
2. Get outside of my own methods and join the mindset of the mentee
3. Establish new relationships and broaden my community
4. Seize opportunity to reiterate best accepted ways to present art
5. Rejuvenate and reinvent myself and test my proven techniques
6. Work with a diversified group of people from various cultures
7. Share with mentee how I communicate my passion for art
8. Create a collaborative work environment and exchange new ideas
9. Build new tactics to teach how to make art speak
10. Gain insight on how mentee approaches a tour
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Answers to Question 4: What do you expect from your relationship with your mentee?

1. Learn reasons why mentee wishes to be a docent
2. Broaden my horizon, and learn how to work as a team
3. Observe and assimilate new perspectives on artwork
4. Work in a collaborative and constructive way
5. Get out of myself and re-assess my own skills
6. Respect the mentee’s interpretation of artworks
7. Test the effectiveness of the MMFA’s dialogic approach
8. Learn to love art that I originally ignored or disliked
9. Observe the emotion and intellect of the mentee
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Our Case Study: The Mentors’ Experience

Theoretical (T): About Research and Content

Practical (P): About the animation

Sensorial (S): About the sensitivity towards visitors
Answers to Question 5:  
*What strategies do you use to help the mentee?*

**T:** Encourage the mentee to understand the gallery spaces,
**T:** Encourage mentee to go beyond art history, to include history, literature, sociology, and politics in the presentation of art

**T:** Demonstrate how I guide by inviting mentee to follow my tours

**P:** Debrief and talk about the quality of my tour

**P:** Discuss mentee’s scenario, and review approaches for the tour

**P:** Coach the mentee how to find multiple answers to questions

**P:** Steer the mentee towards clear communication

**S:** Practice how to capture the mood of the audience

**S:** Coach mentee to present tour as a story and create momentum

**S:** Teach mentee to accept silence and let the public to take in the art
What about you?...

Do you have a mentoring program in your museum?
Have you ever been a mentor?
Did you have any major concerns when you first started docenting?
What type of support would you have liked to get as a new docent?
In hindsight, would a mentor have helped you overcome certain hurdles?
For those who have a mentoring program: What works best in your program?
What do you learn while observing a new docent?
As a mentor, which experience do you believe is essential?
What do you hope to get out of your experience as a mentor?
Thank you and Come Visit the MMFA in Montreal