Noticing Tour: Then and Now at the Palace of Fine Arts

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May 2004

THIS IS **NOT** A DEFINITIVE FINAL REPORT

FORMATIVE evaluation studies like this one often:

- **are conducted quickly**, which may mean
  - small sample sizes
  - expedited analyses
  - brief reports

- **look at an earlier version** of the exhibit/program, which may mean
  - a focus on problems and solutions, rather than successes
  - a change in form or title of the final exhibit/program

Outdoor Exploratorium
Noticing Tour: Then and Now at the Palace of Fine Arts

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PURPOSE

The Then and Now Tour was the Outdoor Exploratorium's first noticing tour made available to the general public. When it was first envisioned, it had two purposes:

- It would be a prototype of a noticing tour that we would refine and perhaps offer to the public on an ongoing basis.
- It would be a means of collecting initial information about
  - the format of a self-guided, structured tour in encouraging noticing,

- the simple tools (i.e., a perspective drawer, a frame, and a transparency) as useful noticing aids, and
- the longer-term effects of the tour, specifically in inspiring its participants to notice the outdoors and pursue interests sparked by their experiences on the tour.

Since it was first developed, we have found that logistical difficulties would prevent us from offering the tour on an ongoing basis. The report, therefore, focuses on the more general lessons learned about the format and tools and the types of noticing they fostered, and not on specific recommendations for improving the Then and Now tour.

METHOD

Activity and Material

The Then and Now tour was a self-guided tour of the Palace of Fine Arts (PFA) and the surrounding Marina neighborhood. It consisted of 8 stops, 5 in the PFA and 3 in the residential streets. See the map in Figure 1. An accompanying bag of materials helped tour participants explore what was and what is at each stop. The bag contained

- A booklet with information about each of the stops. The information included a short story about what was at the stop in the past, a photograph of the area in the past, and suggestions for activities to try and questions to ponder. A chronological narrative tied the stops together and told the story of the area from the 1915 Pan-Pacific International Exposition to the 1989 Loma Prieta Earthquake. A sample page from the booklet is provided in Appendix A.
- A map of the area with the location of each stop. See Figure 1.
- A perspective drawer. This was a tool volunteers assembled at the Exploratorium for this tour. It allowed a visitor to 'trace' scenery onto a transparency. See Figure 2.
- A blue cardboard frame that allowed visitors to better frame a scene for comparison to photos in the booklet
- A transparency with a photograph of the rotunda taken in the 1960s, which could be held up and matched to the current rotunda. See Figure 3.
- A small photo book with additional pictures of the area.

Figure 1. Map for the Then and Now Tour



Figure 2. The Perspective Drawer

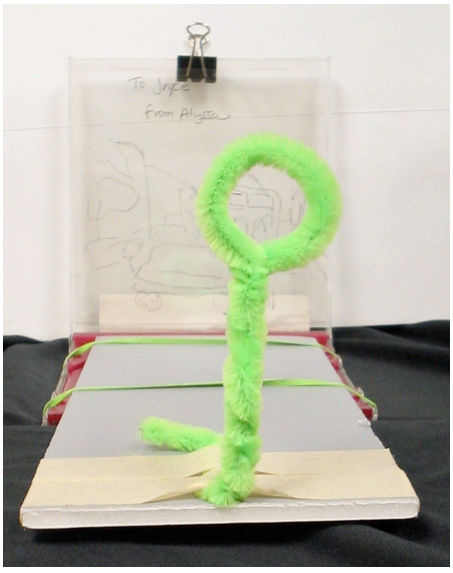


Figure 3. Transparency



Stops 1-5 were each marked by a stand and a stop number. Stop 1 was designed to look like a street sign to indicate the street intersection that existed at that location before 1915. Stop 2 had a metal frame to help visitors look at the current scene and compare it to a historic photograph. (This metal frame looked like the frame we provided visitors in their bag of materials.) Stop 5 (Figure 4) had a similar metal frame to help visitors line up the transparency (Figure 3) with the current view of the rotunda.

Figure 4. Stop #5



An evaluator gave a brief, 5-minute orientation before the tour to help acquaint visitors to the map and the tools. The orientation script is included in Appendix B.

Participants

Recruitment for this study was done in two ways: 1) We recruited museum visitors on the day of the tour. 2) We scheduled members to come and try the Then and Now Tour at pre-assigned times.

Recruiting visitors on the museum floor

We experimented with three different desk locations to recruit visitors on the floor on six different days the tour was offered. (See Table 1.)

1) We set up a table inside the Exploratorium next to the Information Desk by the Store. We placed a lollipop sign describing the Then and Now Tour next to our table. We then laid out all the tools and the booklet on the table in plain view to attract potential participants. An evaluator sat at the desk to answer any questions and to sign up interested visitors for the tour. A sign promoting the tour was also placed on each of the two What's Happening Today stands. We gave the Admission Desk flyers advertising the tour, which the staff handed out to adults as they came into the Exploratorium.

2) We set up the table outside the Exploratorium, next to the Holes in a Wall exhibit. Again, we placed the tools and booklet in plain view, we put a lollipop sign next to the desk describing the Then and Now Tour, and an evaluator sat at the desk to answer questions and sign up visitors for the tour.

3) We also tried to recruit visitors with the desk set up in the lobby, before Admissions but inside the glass doors.

Table 1. Then and Now Tour Dates

Date	Day	Desk position
11/2/2003	Sunday	inside
11/15/2003	Saturday	outside
11/16/2003	Sunday	outside
11/22/2003	Saturday	lobby
11/23/2003	Sunday	outside
11/29/2003	Saturday	outside

Recruiting from the membership pool

We asked members to sign up beforehand for the Then and Now Tour. To recruit members, Lynn Bruni of Membership Services sent an email to Exploratorium members 3 weeks before the scheduled tour. A copy of this email can be found in Appendix C. Thirteen member groups came during their assigned time on Sunday, December 7. (The tour originally planned for Saturday, December 6 was canceled due to rain.)

Group Composition

In total, 35 groups took the Then and Now Tour including members and non-members. Table 2 summarizes the composition of these groups. Note that a large majority of the participants, particularly from the floor recruitment, were adult groups.

Table 2. Group Composition

Group Composition	Count
General Recruitment	
Adult Group	16
Adult Individual	2
Adult with Children (Family Group)	2
Membership Recruitment	
Adult Group	7
Adult Individual	1
Adult with Children (Family Group)	5

Data Corpus

We gathered three sets of data for this study:

1) Decline/Accept Information - On the days when we offered the Then and Now Tour to the general Exploratorium visitors, we collected data on the number of visitors who stopped at the desk but did not take the tour and the number of visitors who went on the tour. For the former, we asked why they chose not to go on the Then and Now Tour although we did not press visitors very hard for a response. We hoped that this data would give us a preliminary idea of hindrances to visitors' going outside. This information would supplement data being collected from a front-end study looking at visitors' outdoor activities and interests around the Exploratorium.

2) Interview data collected immediately following the tour - Immediately following the tour, an evaluator asked each group if they would be willing to give us feedback on their experiences. We had 2 versions of the interview prepared, a long, or complete, version and the shortened version. The complete version is included in Appendix D. We first asked if the group would be willing to spend 20 minutes giving us feedback. If they declined because they did not have the time, we asked if they would be willing to answer a few quick questions, which made up the short interview. Because the short interviews were often rushed, we found that they gave us very little useful information. Therefore, unless otherwise stated, the crux of the analysis is based on data from the complete version of the interview. As shown in Table 2, most of these came from members. Therefore, the results from these data are skewed to members who were asked to come, experience the entire tour, and give us feedback.

3) Follow-up phone interview data. In all cases, we asked visitors if they would be willing to answer a few more questions in a follow-up phone interview. We obtained signed consent forms from those individuals who agreed to the phone interview, and we called these individuals 3 1/2 to 4 1/2 months after their Then and Now Tour. The questions used in the phone interview are in Appendix D.

Table 3. Data collected from the different groups

Group	Accept/ Decline info	No Interview	Short Interview	Complete Interview	Phone Interview
General Recruitment	106	13[1]	5[2]	2[3]	2
Membership Recruitment	n/a	0	0	13[4]	9

[1] 10 adult groups, 1 individual, and 2 family groups declined to be interviewed.
[2] We administered the short interview to 5 adult groups.
[3] We administered the complete interview to 1 adult group and 1 individual.
[4] All member groups stayed for the complete interview.

RESULTS

Decline/Accept Information – General Visitors

We found that out of 106 visitors who stopped at the desk, 20 (19%) took the tour. Table 4 gives the tally according to desk location.

Table 4. Tally of visitors who went on the tour

Desk location	Go on tour	Stopped but did not go on tour	Total
inside	0	9	9
outside	19	63	82
lobby	1	14	15
Total	20	86	106

Visitors gave various reasons for not going on the Then and Now Tour. The top 4 reasons were:

- They wanted to look inside first (23 visitors)
- They were not interested in the tour as described (14 visitors)
- They didn't have the time (13 visitors)
- They had other plans (11 visitors)

These findings suggest potential difficulties in getting floor visitors to commit time to spend outside especially if they anticipated coming to visit *inside* the Exploratorium. This difficulty, however, may be limited to tours or other 'single experience' activities that require a long time commitment. Visitors may be more willing to spend time outside with a cluster of exhibits and/ or shorter activities. Alternatively, visitors who know about outside activities of programs beforehand may be more inclined to set aside the time.

General Impressions – Likes and Dislikes (Post Tour Interview)

This section is based on visitors' responses to the long, complete interview given immediately after the tour. Recall that most of the visitors who stayed for the complete interview were members who signed up beforehand for the Then and Now Tour. These findings are, therefore, skewed towards these members' responses.

Did participants feel it was worthwhile?

All of the tour participants (15/15) felt that the Then and Now Tour was worthwhile. When asked if they would be willing to pay $2 for the tour, all but four said they would. The four were also willing to pay some money but asked for either a reduced rate for members or a souvenir they could take home from the tour.

What made it worthwhile? In general

Visitors explained that the tour was worthwhile because:

- It gave them a different perspective (6 participants). For example,

  Visitor02: Gave us a history perspective.

  Member06: Seeing [the area] through much better eyes

  Member13: When you come a few times and you've seen the exhibits, it gives you a little more perspective and history – you can take it one level further.

- They learned facts and the history of the area (6 participants). For example,

  Visitor03: Learning more about the history – this is one of the landmarks of San Francisco, I always take visitors here and this is a real hidden treasure

  Member03: Learning everything about rotunda and destruction w/ really big buildings and destruction of earth. Really feels nice to know… The extent of the expo ground and the fact that it was demolished and houses built

  Member04: I like learning facts… It was interesting. We were learning and it was fun

- It slowed them down to take a look (2 participants)

  Visitor02: Otherwise, we would probably walk through the whole thing in 5 min

  Member08: Because it slowed us down

- It gave them a chance to go outside (2 participants)

  Member09: It brings people out and into your neighborhood

  Member11: It was nice to get outside because museums are so intense and can overload you. It's a way to freshen people's senses from the way museums can overload them.

Over one third of the visitors interviewed appreciated the tour because it gave them a different way of looking at the surrounding area. Yet, learning historical facts was an equally important aspect of the tour.

What made a stop interesting / not interesting?

We asked visitors to talk about their favorite stop for more specific information about what made a stop interesting:

- Visitors found a stop interesting if it offered a good comparison between then and now (9 participants).
- Visitors found personal connections at the stops they found interesting(4 participants)
- Visitors talked about being transported into the past (3 participants)
- Visitors were interested in learning historical fact (2 participants)
- Visitors were drawn to a particular setting and perspective (2 participants)
- Visitors found the tools used at a stop interesting (2 participants)
- Visitors were interested in an explanation of what happened at a certain stop (1 participant)

Alternatively, we asked visitors to talk about the stop they found to be the least interesting. These stops were characterized by

- Redundancy with another stop (8 participants). These are stops that visitors felt presented information or a scene too similar to another stop.
- Poor then and now comparison (6 participants). "Poor" can mean
  - The then and now was difficult to compare (5 participants). Visitors could not easily align the then and now scenes.
  - There was too little difference between the then and now (2 participants)
  - There was too much difference between the then and now (1 participant)
- Familiar information (3 participants). Visitors were less interested in stops that presented information they already knew.
- No interesting activity (1 participant). The visitor wanted more to do at a stop.

Most participants found a stop interesting if it provided a good then and now comparison. A 'good' comparison is one that allows visitors to see enough differences and yet identify and align similarities.

At the same time, visitors were looking to notice, to do and to learn something different at each stop. Variety while maintaining some thematic coherence was important to visitors on this tour.

Noticing (Post Tour Interview)

This study looks in particular at supporting visitors in noticing a familiar area in a new way. We designed the Then and Now Tour to encourage visitors to see the surrounding area by giving them a historical perspective primarily through comparing photographs from the past to what they see now. We now take a look at the nature of visitors' noticing on the Then and Now Tour.

Did visitors notice differently?

We asked the tour participants whether they found themselves looking or noticing differently during the Then and Now Tour. Three of the participant groups felt that they did not look at anything differently. The other groups felt that they had in the following ways:

- The tour allowed them to take another look (8 groups). Visitors mentioned being more aware and slowing down to focus and look. For example,

  Visitor3: Yes, it gave me a more critical eye, imagining the then and now

  Member08: I was slowed down.

  Member13: Yes, you put yourself on the walk to see things – it's very purposeful, there's no destination, you're not late for anything.
- The tour give them a historical perspective (6 groups)
  - Visitors talked about gaining depth of information (2 groups). For example,

    Member01: Gives me a historical perspective. I realized that there was a 1915 Pan Pacific International Exposition. This went into more depth. It was good. I'm interested
  - Visitors included learning facts as an aspect of noticing differently (2 groups). For example,

    Visitor02: Yes. I didn't know the history of the rotunda. How the district was renamed. Curious of how it's all landfill. How it was filled with rubbles from the earthquake in 1906 and how that's the reason for later destructions.
  - Visitors mentioned how the photos helped them think about how things have changed (2 groups). For example,

    Member05: I don't usually think about history, especially not what it actually looked like [in the past]. I noticed how much it had changed. It made me start thinking differently

Noticing Beyond the Tour

The Then and Now Tour was a fairly structured tour. That is, it led visitors from one stop to the next, pointing out specific scenes to notice. We were concerned that the tour was too structured, placing too much focus on particular aspects of the outdoors, and did not allow visitors opportunities to notice on their own.

What did they notice outside of the booklet?

To gauge if visitors also noticed other aspects of the environment, we asked visitors if they were surprised by anything they found on the tour that was not called out in the booklet. Twelve out of the 15 groups mentioned noticing something outside of the booklet, including

- Specific parts of the PFA (7 groups), such as the decorations on the buildings and the fence around the lagoon.

  Member01: Decorations on the building. Goddesses.

  Member04: The rotunda is really big. There was a net, maybe to catch something falling. It was muddy

  Member06: I noticed that Walter Johnson's name does not appear anywhere in the park

  Member07: We asked about the secondary structure sitting off to the side … and the angels.

  Member08: The size of the PPIE, realizing that for the first time the columns were different colors.

  Member12: The fences. That the area is falling down now

  Member13: The chain fence around the lagoon, the walkway is crumbling. I wondered when the fence was put there, if anything happened. I wondered about the one section with no fence

- Wildlife (5 groups), particularly the birds in the lagoon

  Member01: The variety of birdlife. I thought there were a lot of people coming here to feed them. Pigeons and ducks. But there are unusual birds. We're thinking of buying a book [on birds]. Never saw before. I try to look at birds a lot

  Member02: The ducks. Different colors on them

  Member09: We literally stopped and smelt the roses. It would be nice to have more about the landscaping in the lagoon.

  Member10: I wanted more, I was interested in what waterfowl were out there

  Member11: The horrid condition of the grounds, that they are using a horrible invasive plant as an ornament.

- Houses in the Marina (3 groups)

  Member02: They seem to have changed style.. old colonial now more modern

  Member09: We talked about the architecture in the Marina, what makes it a desirable neighborhood.

  Member11: At Baker and Beach there is a Florentine palazzo with a wonderful mottled finish, very rectilinear but the finishes were nice. I got to look more carefully at pre and post 1989 building, can see the differences even though they tried to rebuild it the same way. The lobbies of the buildings in the Marina – very art deco and beautiful.

- Human activity (2 groups), in particular weddings at the PFA

  Member03: No wedding parties. … Nice place to have weddings

  Member10: I was surprised about the wedding parties out taking pictures on such a cold day. I thought of all the statuary, it's a really big story of the area from one earthquake to another.

- Other landmarks, specifically the lighthouse in the distance (1 group)

Of the groups that did mention noticing something outside of the booklet, over half noticed an aspect of the PFA. However, some participants also noticed things outside of the tour's focus including wildlife, Marina houses, and human activities. This indicates that visitors, while focused on the contents of the Then and Now Tour were, nonetheless, able to find opportunities to notice on their own.

Did visitors look for things on their own?

We wondered if visitors took this noticing beyond casual observation. That is, did they actively try to look for things of interest to themselves that were not specifically pointed out in the booklet? When we asked, we found that 9 out of 15 visitors did. They looked for:

- Evidence of an earthquake (3 groups)

  Member04: Looking for buildings. Was it there before the earthquake? There was a building with large glass windows. That couldn't have been there before the earthquake.

  Member06: We looked at the walls. We are very much aware of the disaster of the area after the earthquake and the building reconstruction. We also noticed that when the buildings would be rebuilt that they would be replaced, not modernized. They were strengthened but not different.

  Member12: Looked for evidence of earthquake after Stop 8. Looked at the houses, noticed that a lot of buildings are new

- What it was like with all the PPIE buildings (2 groups)

  Member07: Yes, we had the book and we were trying to pinpoint what we could have seen in the exhibit from where we were walking and what it would have been like with all the buildings.

  Member13: At Stop 6, it was clear that no one thought there would be a rotunda – they could have lined up Beach St better. It doesn't match the Aisle of Sunset.

- The birds in the lagoon (2 groups)

  Member05: Swans

  Member09: We were interested in the swans and the birds.

- What other people were doing (1 group)

  Member01: Lots of people taking photos. Look at what [they were looking at]

- The architecture of the rotunda (1 group)

  Member10: When we were actively walking we noticed how tall the pillars were, we counted the sections.

But, over one third (6 out of 15) of the groups did not look for anything outside of the booklet. As one of these visitors explained:

Visitor02: We usually just read the book or discuss what we saw in the last stop

Did the tools help visitors notice?

In the remainder of this section, we will look at the booklet and the tools that we gave the visitors to help them notice the then and now. We hope that these results can inform future development of noticing tools and aids that may be used in other programs, a noticing tool shed or in stand-alone exhibits.

The Booklet

We found that 15/15 groups interviewed referred to the booklet at every stop, and 14/15 groups read the booklet in detail with the remaining group skimming parts of the booklet. The booklet provided the primary interpretation for the tour. As one visitor indicated:

Member06: [I] read everything in detail. You needed it, it explained everything.

The Frame

We found that 14/15 groups used the frame at least once during their Then and Now Tour. We asked these groups if using the frame helped them see anything they didn't or couldn't see without it. Eight of these groups did not feel that the frame helped them notice differently; the remaining 6 did. They mentioned that using the frame helped them:

- Get into the right position to see the present area to compare it to the historical photographs (3 groups). As one participant explained:

  Member13: I was looking in the wrong direction until I used the framer and noticed the buildings to see that wasn't right.

- See details when comparing the present to the past (2 groups). For example,

  Member07: Yes, we noticed the existing detail. Also the dome appears higher now, but it could just be the way we were looking at it.

- Compose a photograph (1 group)

  Visitor03: It made me realize how great a photo it would make

- Focus on only one portion of the larger landscape (1 group)

  Member04: Helped focus and not be distracted by the other buildings

Four groups had some difficulty using the frame; the difficulties they reported include visitors' not finding the right spot to use the framer and visitors' feeling self-conscious about using the tool. Finally, when asked, less than half (6 out of 14[1]) the groups thought we should keep the frame as part of the tour packet. See Table 5. These data suggest that this tool was useful to some visitors for some stops but was not a critical part of the visitors' noticing experience on the tour.

The Perspective Drawer

Six out of 15 groups used the perspective drawer on the tour. Of these six, 3 groups felt that drawing helped them see more details that they would not have noticed otherwise. However, a majority of the visitor groups did not feel that the perspective drawer was useful on the tour; they reported:

- It was clumsy to use outside (3 groups)
- They couldn't find a good place to draw (2 groups)
- Using the perspective drawer made them feel self-conscious (2 groups)
- They couldn't find a good scene to draw (1 group)
- There weren't enough instructions on how to use the perspective drawer (1 group)

Yet, when asked if we should keep the perspective drawer as part of the tour, seven groups said 'yes'. (Refer to Table 5.) They thought it was a creative and 'cool' tool and that visitors can take home their own drawings as a souvenir from the tour.

The Transparency

Every group used the transparency at stop #5 where they looked towards the rotunda from across the lagoon. Visitors claimed that the transparency helped them:

- compare the then and now (6 groups). For example,

  Member05: You could really see what it was like back then when it was superimposed

  Member06: I noticed things in trying to match the transparency, like that the tree in 1915 has not changed very much. Also, up on top of the building, it looks like there's an urn that's not visible in the transparency.

- focus, particularly on the details of what they were seeing (3 groups). One visitor explained:

  Member12: [It] just focused our attention on the details of the rotunda.

However, 4 groups thought it did not help them notice anything they would not have noticed without this tool.

[1] One group did not answer this question.

Most visitors did not have any problems using the transparencies. One visitor reported, "It was dead simple." Alternatively, a few visitors found it difficult to line up the transparency or to clearly see the rotunda because of an obstructed view from stop #5. Yet, most visitors wanted us to keep the transparency in the Then and Now Tour.

Table 5. Summary of Tool Use

Tool	Used tool?		Keep tool as part of tour?[2]		
	Yes	No	Yes	Qualified Yes – may be useful to *others*	No
Frame	14	1	6	5	3
Perspective Drawer	6	9	7	4	3
Transparency	15	0	12	0	2

Long-term Effects (Follow-up phone interviews)

One of the goals of the Outdoor Exploratorium Project is to help visitors become more attuned to their outdoor environment not just while they are visiting the Exploratorium but afterwards. To find out if the Then and Now Tour had any long-term effects, we called the tour participants for a short follow-up, phone interview 3 1/2 to 4 1/2 months after the participants took the tour. We were able to reach 11 visitors, most of whom were Exploratorium members. See Table 3.

Noticing differently

We asked visitors if the tour changed the way they looked at the outdoors. We found 9 out of 11 visitors reported that the tour did change the way they noticed.

- 4 visitors mentioned that they are more attentive, for example:

  GroupH:. taking some time to look around when I get the chance.

- 3 visitors mentioned that they are now more curious about the history of places, for example:

  GroupB: made me curious about what places look like in the past. It's interesting. It's like traveling back in time.

- 2 visitors felt that they have a very different perspective about the area around the Exploratorium, specifically.

  GroupE: About the whole marina neighborhood… once you know more history behind something, it changes your perspective. Now I have a sense of what was there before all the current buildings were put in.

[2] One group did not answer this set of questions.

However, few groups gave any concrete examples.

Provoking curiosity

In their follow-up interviews, we asked visitors if the tour made them more curious about anything.

- 7 (out of 11) groups mentioned becoming more curious about:
  - The history behind buildings (5 out of 11). As one visitor explained:

    GroupG: I like history, but don't usually think of the history behind buildings in San Francisco. now i'm more curious about the history behind things in the city, like the ones i mentioned at golden gate park.
  - Earthquakes (2 out of 11). For example,

    GroupK: in general curious about earthquake and safety, especially with reference to where we live and work.
  - Birds they saw in the lagoon (1 out of 11)

    GroupC: about the birds there, there were some unusual ones there that we couldn't figure out what they were.
- However, 5 (out of 11) groups indicated that they were always curious about the outside area around the Exploratorium. The tour simply gave them answers to questions they already had.
- None of the groups actively pursued any questions or interests that the tour provoked after they finished the Then and Now Tour. That is, none of them tried to find out more or were inspired to create art or experiment on their own outside the tour experience.

DISCUSSION AND SUMMARY

This study looked at visitors' experiences in a self-guided, structured tour designed to encourage visitors to notice the area around the Exploratorium. It used then and now comparisons aided by photographs and simple tools to try to help visitors notice their current surroundings within a historical narrative.

We offered the tour to floor visitors as well as to members who signed up in advance for a slot on the tour. This was done to get feedback from both the general museum audience as well as the Exploratorium membership. However, we found that it was difficult to recruit floor visitors to take the tour since many visitors came expecting to spend time inside the Exploratorium and not outside the Exploratorium with an activity that required a long time commitment. This observation does not necessarily mean that we will have difficulty getting people to visit an Outdoor Exploratorium, but it does suggest difficulties in using programmatic activities to collect feedback from the more general museum audience. Consequently, the results from this study are skewed toward Exploratorium members who self-selected to participate in the Then and Now Tour, a tour advertised to focus on history and architecture.

Noticing on the Tour

Most visitors reported that the tour helped them notice differently. Visitors mentioned that the tour made them slow down and be more aware of their surroundings; others explained that the tour gave them a new historical perspective of the area. All of the participants thought the tour was worthwhile.

The Then and Now Tour is a self-guided tour that led visitors from one stop to the next, pointing out specific scenes to notice. One of the hopes of the Outdoor Exploratorium is that visitors will not only notice what is pointed out to them but become more generally attentive to the outdoors and feel empowered to notice on their own. We were, therefore, interested in whether or not the tour allowed visitors the opportunity to notice aspects of the outdoors beyond what we pointed out and to pursue their own interests during the tour.

We found that most (12 out of 15) groups noticed something not explicitly mentioned in the guide booklet. Of these groups, over half noticed something about the outdoors that is in keeping with the historical and architectural emphasis of the Then and Now Tour. However, visitors also noticed things that were outside of the tour's focus (i.e. wildlife, Marina houses, human activities, and even a lighthouse outside of the tour area.) This suggests that visitors were able to find room to notice on their own.

Furthermore, we found that over half (9 out of 15) of the groups actively looked for something outside the tour. That is, these groups decided to look on their own for things they became curious about during their tour that were not explicitly pointed out in the tour booklet. This indicates that visitors were empowered to explore on their own during the Then and Now Tour. Furthermore, it suggests that a format similar to the one we used in the Then and Now Tour can be effective in guiding visitors in noticing while giving them the freedom to explore and notice what interests them.

Techniques and Tools to Support Noticing

We used comparisons between then and now as the primary means to help visitors notice the outdoors in this noticing tour. Asking visitors to look at the present and compare it to the past seemed to engage the interest of the tour participants; for most visitors, their favorite stops were ones that they judged to have a good then and now comparison. Comparison seems to be a promising technique of encouraging visitors to notice their environment. However, comparisons seem to only be effective if they allow visitors to not only see differences but also identify and align similarities.

In this noticing tour, we offered visitors a few simple tools to help them notice the environment. Of these tools, the frame and the transparency were most often used; they were better integrated into the tour mainly because they helped visitors compare the then and now. The other tool, the perspective drawer, was less integrated. Fewer people used this tool and some claimed that it was difficult to use on the tour. Yet, the people who used it thought that drawing made them more attentive to what they saw. The perspective drawer, therefore, may be a tool that can be improved and used to foster noticing, particularly outdoor scenes, through drawing.

Noticing after the Tour

From follow-up phone interviews conducted months after the tour, we found that a majority of visitors reported being more attentive and being more curious about the outdoors, specifically about buildings and history, after taking the Then and Now Tour. However, most visitors' responses lacked any specificity, and no visitor reported actively pursuing any questions or interests that were provoked by the tour. This may be due to the nature of these follow-up interviews where visitor tend to describe general impressions rather than crisp, concrete recollections. However, it may also indicate that the noticing tour did not lead to many profound consequences for its participants after they left the Exploratorium.

Next Steps

This study is the first in what we anticipate to be a series of studies that look at noticing tours, which employ different techniques to help visitors notice different aspects of the outdoors. This study looked specifically at using comparison techniques within a self-guided tour to help visitors notice architecture and history. In subsequent noticing tours, we will look at other content areas and explore other techniques. We will also try other ways of recruiting from the larger visitor pool for more representative data on what techniques may work to help visitors notice the outdoors.

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APPENDIX A

Sample Page from the Tour Booklet

STOP 4:

What has changed since 1915?



Photo Credit: www.maybeck.org

Then

Use the framer in the bag to find the site today

-or-

Draw it with the perspective

Now

After the Panama-Pacific International Exposition

Although the current building does not have many of the architectural elements of the original 1915 building, you may notice that the current site has elements that the original did not have. Most prominent are the redwood trees that were planted along the peristyle (a series of columns enclosing a court).

The architect of the Palace of Fine Arts, Bernard Maybeck, had originally intended to plant redwood trees on the grounds for the 1915 Panama-Pacific International Exposition. However, due to lack of funds, this was never done for the Exposition.

Then, after World War II, when asked what he would like to see happen to the Palace of Fine Arts, Maybeck said:

> "I think the main building should be torn down and redwoods planted around--completely around -- the rotunda. Redwoods grow fast, you know. And as they grow, the columns of the rotunda would slowly crumble, at approximately the same speed. Then I would like to design an altar, with the figure of a maiden praying, to install in that grove of redwoods. I should like my Palace to die behind those great trees of its own accord, and become its own cemetery."

The Palace of Fine Arts was never allowed to die, but redwood trees were finally planted around the building in 1965.

Follow the directional signs around the lagoon to STOP 5.

APPENDIX B

Orientation for Tour Participants

I'm going to give you a bag of goodies for the tour. Do you have an id you can leave with us in exchange for the bag? We'll keep this safe and return your id to you when you're finished with the tour.

<*If questioned about id*> It helps us track how many people are on the tour and how many bags we've signed out. It also reminds people to return the material to us. We have a limited number. If you don't have a driver's license, what about a library card, or a gym membership card?

So, here's what you'll find in your bag:

- Here's a guidebook. Inside the guidebook you'll find
  - a map. It tells you where to walk and where the tour stops are. There are 8 stops in all, starting here at 1 [show map]. There are little numbered stands for Stops 1-5. So, look for stands with numbers on them for stops 1-5. And there are other signs to help guide you along the way. Just to let you know: there are no signs for stops 6-8, once you walk into the residential streets. You'll be using the map to find your way to stops 6-8.
  - You'll also find some information about what you'll see and do at each spot [flip to stop #1] in the guidebook.
- I'm also going to give you some tools that you might want to use as you explore the area. Here is a:
  - Framer. You can use this to help frame the scene and help you compare what you see today to the pictures of the past you find in the guidebook.
  - Perspective Drawer. You can use this to help you draw what you see. [Demonstrate] So, just hold this up, look through the eyepiece and draw. Feel free to draw on these transparencies. It usually is best when you're drawing something far off. It doesn't work very well if you want to draw something close up. [Fold back together]
  - A transparency. This will be used at one of the stops and helps you line up the present with the past.
  - Additional images in this little book, in case you want to see more pictures of what this area used to look like.

Will you please return the bag and the materials to this desk when you're done with the tour? If it is at all possible, will you return by xxx <give 2 hours or 5 pm whichever comes first>?

Do you have any questions?

Have a good time…

APPENDIX C

Email to Members

Dear Member:

The Exploratorium is looking for feedback on a new Then and Now "noticing tour." The Then and Now tour - a part of the Outdoor Exploratorium project - is a free, self-guided walking tour of the area immediately around the Palace of Fine Arts and parts of the surrounding neighborhood. On your walk, you'll have an opportunity to explore the area, see what it was like in the past, and use some simple and fun tools to see how time has changed the district. The complete tour typically takes about 1 hour. Afterwards, we'd like to talk with you for 20 minutes or so about your experience. Your feedback will help us make this a more interesting activity for visitors and to plan other outdoor events at the Exploratorium.

We are looking for groups of 1 to 4 people to take the complete tour and provide feedback. We would like input from families (all children should be at least 10 years old), groups of adults, and individuals. Each group will receive a small gift as a token of our thanks.

Then and Now tours will happen on Saturday, December 6, and Sunday, December 7, 2003. Tours begin at 12 noon, 12:30, 1:00, 1:30, 2:00, 2:30, 3:00, and 3:30. If you're interested in participating or have any questions, please contact Jessica Ruskin at [redacted]@exploratorium.edu. To reserve a spot, please include the following information in your email:

Once we've received your reservation, we'll send you a confirmation email with further information about the tour.

Thank you for helping create new Exploratorium events!

Jessica Ruskin, Project Manager
Outdoor Exploratorium

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APPENDIX D

Interview Questions

Post Tour Interview (Long, complete version)

1. Approximately how long did you spend on the tour?
2. [if came back alone] Did you go with others people or by yourself?

[if came back with others] Did you go together? Who else was in your group? Kids, other adults?

3. Which spots did you stop at? [Show and mark up map]
4. Was there any particular reason why you decided not to see these other spots on the map?
5. Of all the spots you stopped at, which would you say was the most interesting?
    a. Can you describe what you did at that stop?
    b. Can you describe what you noticed at that stop? Did you notice anything else?
    c. Can you tell me what made that stop more interesting than the other stops?
6. Of the spots you stopped at, which would you say was the least interesting?
    a. Can you describe what you did at that stop?
    b. Can you tell me about what you noticed there? Did you notice anything else?
    c. Can you tell me what made that stop not interesting for you?
7. [pick one stop that they have not already described: stop 3, stop 5, stop 7]. So you also went to stop x? [if yes]
    a. Can you tell me what you did and noticed at stop x [3, 5 or 7]?
    b. Can you tell me a little more about what you noticed at stop x [3, 5 or 7]?
8. Did you find anything difficult to use or understand? What?
    a. [only if Q10 didn't mention navigation] Was it hard to find any of the stops you went to? [if yes] Which ones?
9. Would you say that you referred to the booklet :

    At every stop
    At most stops
    At some stops
    At none of the stops

10. Would you say that you:

    Read everything in the booklet in detail
    Skimmed the booklet reading some parts in detail
    Skimmed the booklet
    Didn't look at anything in the booklet

11. Let's talk a little about these tools.
    a. Framer
        i. Did you get a chance to use this?
        ii. [if yes to i] Did you notice or see anything with the framer that you did not notice without the framer?
        iii. [if yes to i] Did you have any difficulty using it outside?
        iv. Is it worthwhile having this as part of the tour packet? Why/ why not?
    b. Perspective drawer
        i. Did you get a chance to use this? Where?
        ii. [if yes to i] Did you notice or see anything with the perspective drawer that you did not notice without the drawer?
        iii. [if yes to i] Did you have any difficulty using it outside?
        iv. Is it worthwhile having this as part of the tour packet? Why/ why not?
    c. Transparency
        i. Did you get a chance to use this?
        ii. [if yes to i] Did you notice or see anything with the transparency that you did not notice without the transparency?
        iii. [if yes to i] Did you have any difficulty using it outside?
        iv. Is it worthwhile having this as part of the tour packet? Why/ why not?
12. Did anything surprise you as you were walking around outside?
    a. [if Q9 gave something from book] Did you notice anything while you were walking outside that was not specifically described in this book? What?
    b. Did you try to look for anything while your were walking from stop to stop ? [If yes] What?
13. Did you become curious about anything in particular as you were walking around outside?
    a. Was there anything in particular that you noticed that was mentioned in the book that made you curious? What?
    b. Was there anything in particular that you noticed that was NOT mentioned in the book that made you curious? What?
14. Did you feel that you were noticing things differently when you were on the tour? [If yes] How so?
15. Did you notice anything that you found particularly relevant or useful in your life? What? Can you say a little more about why you found that relevant or useful?
16. Did you feel uncomfortable at any time during the tour? [If yes] In what way?
17. Is there anything you would recommend removing from the tour? What? Can you say more about that?
18. Is there anything you would have liked to have done on this tour but couldn't or didn't get a chance to?

19. In general, did you feel the tour was worthwhile?
    a. In what way?
    b. [only if yes to Q19] If we were to charge $2 for this tour, would you be willing to pay for it? Why/ why not?
    c. Do you have any suggestions for how we might improve this experience, that would make it more interesting or more relevant for you

Follow-up Phone Interview Questions

Do you remember visiting the Exploratorium in zzz (month)?

You took a tour of the area outside the Exploratorium. The tour was called the Then and Now noticing tour, and afterwards someone interviewed you about it. Do you remember that?

(If no) It was a self-guided, walking tour. We gave you a bag of tools and a booklet. And, you walked to different stops around the Palace of Fine Arts and the residential streets. Do you remember that?

(If no) OK, that's great. We're trying to find out if people remember that tour, months after their visit, so thanks a lot for being part of our study. I really appreciate your taking the time to talk to us. Have a great day.

(If yes) Great. I know it's been several months since you went on the Then and Now tour.

1) Can you tell me anything you remember from the tour?
Anything else you remember? Anything else?

Great, and now I have a few questions about what's happened since the tour:

2) Has there been anything that's reminded you of the Then and Now Tour for any reason?
Anything else that's reminded you of the tour? Anything else?

3) Has the tour changed the way you look at anything, or think about anything, in your life?
Anything else that's changed, anything in your life that you look at or think about differently?
Anything else?

4) Have you talked about that Then and Now Tour with anyone since taking the tour?

a. Did the people you talked with also go on the tour?
b. Do you remember what you said, when you were talking together about it?
c. Do you remember when you had that conversation?
d. Do you remember whom you had the conversation with?

Was there any other time you talked to anyone about it, either with the same people or someone else?

5) Did the Then and Now Tour make you more curious about anything in particular?
(If yes) Have you done anything to try to find out more about xxx?

Did going on the tour make you more curious about anything else?
(If yes) Have you done anything to try to find out more about xxx?

6) Did the Then and Now Tour encourage you do or try other things? For example, like take other tours, look at architecture, draw?
Anything else?

7) OK, well, that's all of my questions. Is there anything else you'd like to add?