Merging Museum & Classroom: Museum Education as a Teacher's Pedagogy

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Introduction:

Museum education is pivotal in enriching formal education by offering unique learning environments that complement traditional classroom settings. By utilizing a **dynamic partnership** between museum and traditional district or school resources, students can fulfill their state education requirements in a community-based and student engagement-driven environment. For many scholars, the museum education model depends on a **balance** within this partnership between school and museum. Each partner brings its strengths to the table. They grow as a whole from **"mutual goals and a common vision,"** rather than one partner trying to fix the other or trying to meet the other's needs (Klein et al., 2001, p. 3). Various models attempt to explore museum education, such as The Education Program Matrix by the St. Louis Science Center, but research on this topic is still relatively limited. By examining the collaborative efforts between museums and educational institutions, this project seeks to investigate the valuable role of art museums in teaching, especially as it concerns the different concepts and processes involved in this partnership.

Methods:

The goal of the steps is to analyze and reflect on data found in an interview with a teacher to determine how they interact with museum education. The steps are as follows:

1. Completed the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) & received IRB approval.
2. Used Zoom audio transcription to transcribe the interview with a teacher.
3. Utilized grounded theory analysis via coding and memoing to pull theory and processes directly from the data found in the interview.
4. The data and memos collected during grounded theory analysis were used to develop a visual model.

Grounded theory coding consists of at least two phases: "initial and focused coding" (Charmaz, 2014, p. 109). Coding refers to "categorizing segments of data with a short name that simultaneously summarizes and accounts for each piece of data" (Charmaz, 2014, p. 111). After coding, memos are written about each idea so that processes can be further identified and analyzed. Finally, these memos and the categories discovered during coding were used to create a visual model displaying some of the processes related to museum education.

Fig. 1. Process of Creating Visual Model

Legend

▢ (peach)	Presentation Strategies
◆ (purple/pink diamond)	Classroom/Museum Goals: (1) Setting Expectations and (2) Learning Objectives
▲ (blue triangle)	Teaching Approaches: (1) Instructional Strategies, (2) Customizing Learning Based on the Student, and (3) Creating Content/Curriculum
● (purple)	Collaborating Within the School
● (light green)	Bringing Students to the Museum
● (dark green)	Choosing External Partners
● (orange)	Desiring Professional Development & Resources
● (yellow)	Aligning Museum Resources to Class Content
⇔ (white arrow)	Working within Operational Cultures

Fig. 2. Visual Model with accompanying legend
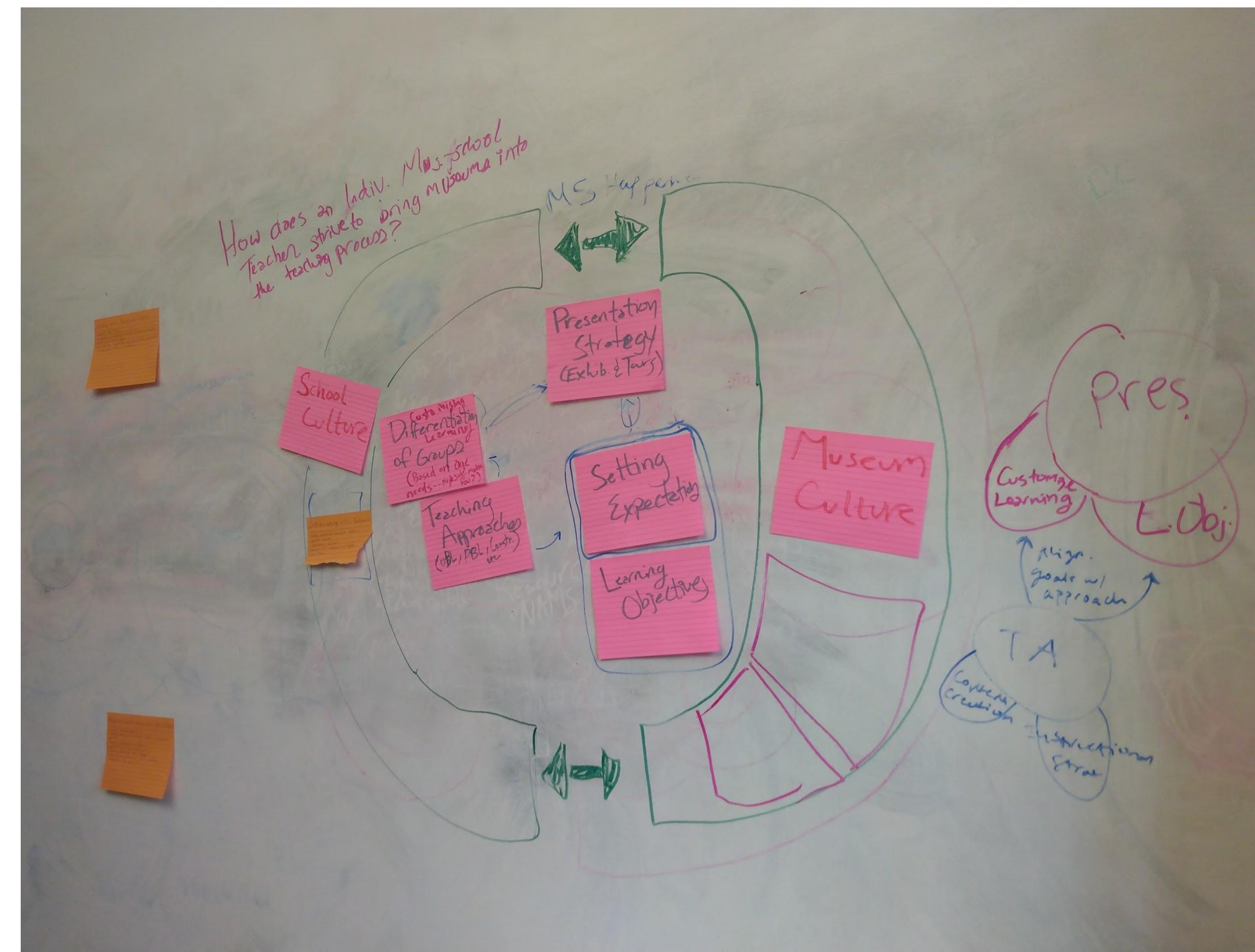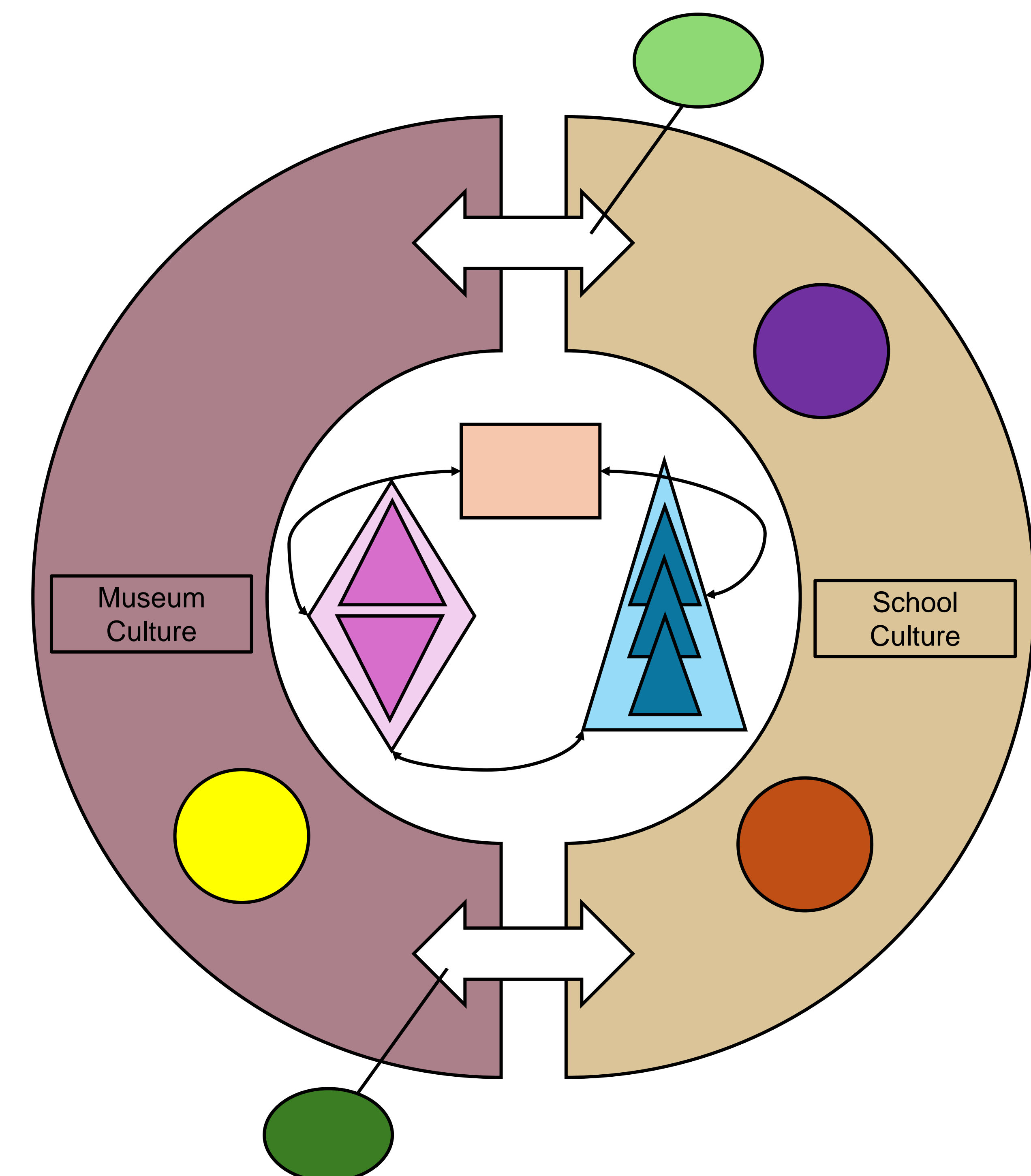
Results:

I analyzed one teacher's interview to answer the question: **How does an individual museum schoolteacher strive to bring museums into the teaching process?** Visual models developed using grounded theory analysis represent key concepts, categories, and relationships identified throughout the data.

For this project, the key concepts were depicted as stages in the process of bringing museums into the teaching process. The preliminary stages for the model are listed in the legend on the left. These stages and the connections between them (as shown by the arrows), illustrate how teachers **combine the informal and formal learning environments of both museum and traditional classroom to make museum education happen**. The results of this visual model are ongoing because research surrounding the museum education process are constantly being built upon. This is only one way to explain the process that is consistent with applying grounded theory analysis. Other models, such as The Education Program Matrix by the St. Louis Science Center, are other ways of describing the museum education process.

Discussion:

Strengths of this research include the grounded theory approach as it ensures that the findings are deeply rooted in the data found in the interview and the focus on teacher perspectives. By centering the research on an individual museum teacher, the challenges and strategies they use to make museum education happen can be studied in-depth. A **limitation** of this project includes narrow transferability, due to the nature of a focused, one-participant case study. This teacher's approach could be vastly different from another's.

Further research on museum education could expand the sample size, perhaps through a comparative study across different museum education institutions/schools. The focus of the research could also further consider engagement, knowledge retention, and skill development from the student's point of view instead of the teachers.

References:

Charmaz, K. (2014). Constructing grounded theory. (2nd ed.) Sage Publications.

Klein, K., Corse, J., Grigsby, V., Hardin, S., & Ward, C. (2001, April 10-14). *A museum school: Building grounded theory as two cultures meet* [Paper presentation]. Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association 2001, Seattle, WA.

Acknowledgement: