

A person is sitting on a dark, modern-looking bench in a museum gallery. In the background, there are ancient Egyptian statues, including a large one with a headdress. The floor is dark and polished, reflecting some light. The overall atmosphere is quiet and contemplative.

Serenity in Seats:

Visitor Comfort in House Museums

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Serenity in Seats: Visitor Comfort in House Museums

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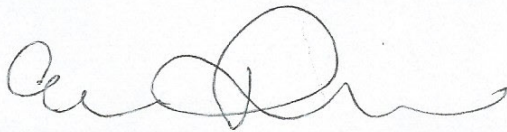
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To the Faculty of University of the Arts

The members of the committee appointed to examine the thesis of Brandon Rothenberger find it satisfactory and recommend it to be accepted.

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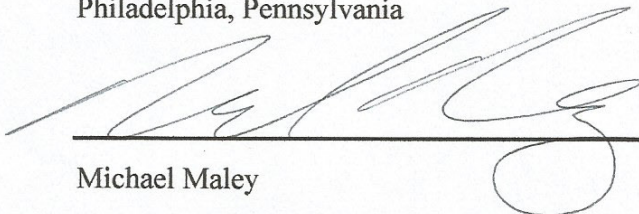
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Abstract

This thesis is a report for museum professionals looking to enhance the museum experience for visitors by making small changes to their museum's physical environment. This thesis theorizes and provides recommendations for the use of seating within the scope of historic house museum tours. A study was conducted, through surveys and observations, to evaluate the benefits and problems of portable seating in historic house museum guided tours to provide visitors a better museum experience. The study was conducted on guided tours at the Powel House and the Ebenezer Maxwell Mansion's observing visitors behaviors during the tour and providing post tour surveys which provided a picture of the visitors' overall museum experience. The study's data was analyzed within the framework of how visibly engaged they were during the guided tour and the extent of museum fatigue the visitors reported. It is concluded that adding portable seating into a house museum guided tour and used it had a positive effect on visitors lowering their mental exhaustion.

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Table of Contents:

Introduction

Area of Inquiry	pg.1
Glossary of Terms	pg.2
Scope of Study	pg.2

Rationale

Needs Statement	pg.3
Literature Review	pgs.4-11

Current State

Case Study	pgs.12-13
Interviews	pgs.13

Thesis Project

Description	pg.14
Methodology.....	pg.14
Observations	pg.15-16

Findings

Implementation	pg.16-17
Observations	pg.17
Summative Evaluation	pg.18-19
Analysis of Findings	pg.20-21

Conclusion.....pg.22

Further Research	pg.22-23
------------------------	----------

Thesis Committeepg.24

Bibliographypg.25-26

Appendix (I-IV)

Tour Survey (I)	pg.27-28
Interview Transcript (II)	pg.29-31

Tables

Powel House (III)	pg.32-33
Ebenezer Maxwell Mansion (IV).....	pg.34-35

Introduction

Area of Inquiry:

The entire museum experience is defined by a series of relatively short engagements with objects that draw visitors' attention. As Jeffery Smith described, "... the median amount of time that individuals spent in front of a work of art was seventeen seconds ... and the mode ...was ten seconds."¹ Visitors' engagement with objects at a museum depends on their motivation and what can draw their attention. Several phenomena can affect visitors' experience at a museum, where it reduces how long and how many objects visitors pay attention to during their visit. One such phenomenon that visitors will experience during their visit to a museum is museum fatigue, a physical and mental phenomenon that affects their motivation, therefore their ability to obtain meaning and value from the museum environment. Guided house museum tours are no exception as it also experiences several phenomena. Therefore, I suggest that providing portable seating to visitors on guided tours in historic house museums will allow visitors to obtain a better museum experience. Providing portable seating will be beneficial to guided house museum tours because it will allow visitors the opportunity to reduce their museum fatigue and maintain their interest and engagement while guided through the museum creating an overall better museum experience.

My plan for my study of museum fatigue present in guided tours and its possible benefits to visitors' experience is to research museum fatigue and use this research to test my hypothesis by introducing portable seating to visitors during their guided tour. I will test my hypothesis by observing visitor behavior with and without seating and collect visitor feedback via post-tour surveys. Through data collected from the observations and surveys, I will see the changes in the visitors' perception of their fatigue, their motivation for visiting, and their learning outcomes. I hypothesize that by providing portable seating to visitors on guided tours in historic house museums will allow visitors to obtain a better museum experience. By doing this study I hope to show the benefits and disadvantages of portable seating in house museum guided tours for museum professionals, especially those in historic house museums, to better understand a specific way to provide more comfort to visitors without editing the physical environment.

1. Jeffrey Smith, *The Museum Effect: How Museums, Libraries, and Cultural Institutions Educate and Civilize Society*, (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014).

Glossary of terms:

Aesthetics: an object or architecture within environment that creates a satisfactory experience that initiates visitor's motivation to build upon their prior experiences and realizing the sense of meaning and value to objects and architecture.²

Engagement: the free choice and control of the visitor to participate in something that connects to their current mastery and motivation.³

Museum experience: interactions with staff and members of one's own group, as well as with other visitors, exhibitions, interpretive materials, and programs, and continues long after the person leaves the museum.

Museum fatigue: a complex phenomenon: mental exhaustion, physical exhaustion, object satiation, and distraction.

Portable seating: Any seating, whether it chair or stool, that is carriable and can be leaned on without any exertion from the visitor.

Space volume: The optimal amount of information and stimulation a visitor can take that is within the length of the visitor's hands spread horizontally.

Visitor motivation: an internal state that arouses, directs and maintains behavior.⁴

Scope of Study:

For this thesis, I conducted observations on visitors in guided tours noting their behaviors with and without portable seating. At the end of the guided tour, I also provided surveys to observe the visitors at the Powel House and Ebenezer Maxwell Mansion. In my surveys, I will measure the extent of visitors' museum fatigue, their motivation, and their learning during their visit. This study started at the beginning of the Summer of 2019 and ended in Fall 2019. My observations and surveys are restricted to adult visitors going through guided tours at the Powel House and the Ebenezer Maxwell Mansion. The evaluation focuses on the motivation of visitors, the behaviors during their visit, and the benefits of portable seating placing seating have on visitors.

2. Stephen Biscotte, "The Necessity of Teaching for Aesthetic Learning Experiences in Undergraduate General Education Science," *The Journal of General Education* 64, no. 3 (2015): 242-56. doi:10.5325/jgeneeduc.64.3.0242.

3. Daniel Pink, *Three Elements of Intrinsic Motivation*.

4. A. Woolfolk, (2001) *Educational Psychology* (8th ed.) Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Rational

Needs statement:

Museum fatigue and its negative impact on visitors' experience matters to me because it is a study on how we as professionals put the visitors' needs first. I perceive a museum visit to be a transformative experience where visitors can obtain enjoyment by learning something new connecting to their prior knowledge and find value of the museum. Museum fatigue is one of the many things that can damage a visitors' good experience. As a museum professional, I want to find a solution to this problem and share this information with other professionals so that they can integrate my method in creating a better experience in their own museums.

This study into portable seating in house museum tours is worthwhile to museum professionals, specifically those in the house museum because it answers the question of how beneficial and effective portable seating is to the visitors' museum experience within house museums. House museums are an inflexible environment where the collection being presented — the house and the objects — cannot be changed easily. Any major changes in the house museum's environment, such as introducing permanent seating in a room, need to be discussed if there is a positive effect on the visitors' museum experience rather than a negative effect due to losing museum space. This study will impact the house museum field by informing professionals on how to effectively provide portable seating to visitors that make an impact on the visitor's overall museum experience. In house museums, guided tours have several limitations from lack of space to install seating in every room, hours of operation, and personnel to make quick changes in the space for programs. Visitors can come into the guided tours with varying levels of museum fatigue and with its onset can hurt a visitor's museum experience for the guided tour. Providing visitors with the most effective method to provide comfort is important to a guided tour's experience. This study into portable seating in historic house museums will benefit the entire museum field by showing data of the effects of museum fatigue on a visitor's experience as well as a list of recommendations about sustaining these benefits.

Literature Review:

To understand my study on portable seating there also needs to be an explanation of the phenomena of museum fatigue and its effects on visitors' experience. Museum fatigue is a complex phenomenon: mental exhaustion, physical exhaustion, object satiation, and distraction. These are associated with a museum visit that results in decreased attention to the museum collection. Stephen Bitgood explains that the "physical and/or mental exhaustion serves as aversive states to be avoided. The threat of exhaustion causes avoidance behavior in the form of how visitors choose to distribute their attention."⁵ Museum fatigue has serious adverse consequences to the visitor's experience. These include increased tiredness, boredom, the selectivity of attention to museum objects, and have the desire to leave the exhibition prematurely. Museum fatigue could also affect future attendance because individuals would perceive the visit to the museum with their experience having museum fatigue, telling others their unfavorable experience. Visitors make choices that they may not be aware of that are based upon the costs and benefits available to them. The more museum fatigue a visitor experiences the higher visitor will perceive the costs rather than the benefits, the value and meaning from the museum's objects and architecture. "The visitor is free to pick and choose, skip what does not interest him and concentrate on his personal preferences."⁶ In the frame of guided tours it causes visitors to be less engaged with the tour and therefore obtaining a less than satisfying museum experience.

Visitors choose alternatives that affect the time spent on each object and room or the intensity of their engagement. In guided tours, this can affect visitors to perceive less value with each object and room reducing their intended learning outcomes; to access prior knowledge and to create memorable experiences that will further the visitor's understanding of a subject and motivate the visitor to learn more. Bitgood explains that "Visitors are constantly choosing whether or not to pay attention. The ratio of benefits (utility, satisfaction) to cost (time, effort) is critical in this decision and should be carefully designed into the visitor experience."⁷ There are two solutions that Stephen Bitgood suggests in *When Is 'Museum Fatigue' Not Fatigue?* that I will use in this study: (1) incorporating "fatigue" in exhibition evaluation and (2) providing planned resting places that combat fatigue and, if possible, enhance visitor engagement. Bitgood explains that more research needs to be done on museum fatigue to guide solutions in its reduction. In this study, I will provide research on museum fatigue as well as a possible solution through portable seating. Additionally, this study will inform other museum professionals about visitors' experiences in guided tours and how their behaviors are affected by the museum environment. This includes how the use of seating or lack of use of seating affects their experience and behaviors as well as what motivates visitors to remain engaged in museums. In my observation of my study, museum fatigue is a visitor demotivator.

5. Stephen Bitgood, "When Is 'Museum Fatigue' Not Fatigue?" *Curator* 2009, 52 (2): 193–202. doi:10.1111/j.2151-6952.2009.tb00344.x.

6. Amy Whitaker, *Museum Legs: Fatigue and Hope in The Face of Art*, (Arizona: Hol Art Books, 2009) 127.

7. Stephen Bitgood, *Attention and Value: Keys to Understanding Museum Visitors*, (California: Left Coast Press 2013). <http://0-search.ebscohost.com/catalog.library.uarts.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=508111&site=eds-live&scope=site>.

Distraction is a phenomenon of museum fatigue where visitors' attention decreases because the perceptual competition in an exhibit exceeds the ability of visitors to process all of it. That is, they are overloaded with information. This is best explained in the study by Sheena Iyengar and Mark Lepper known as the jam study. The study was conducted at an upscale grocery store where customers encountered a jam tasting booth that had either a limited selection of flavors of six or has an extensive assortment of flavors of twenty-four. "The findings from this study show that an extensive array of options can at first seem highly appealing to consumers, yet can reduce their subsequent motivation to purchase the product."⁸ The results of the study challenged the previously held notion that having more, rather than fewer, choices are more desirable and intrinsically motivating. Having too many choices can be detrimental regarding visitor motivation. For historic house museums, in some cases, there will be a huge amount of information provided to visitors within the short time of their tour. Tours at house museums have a likelihood to increase distraction and therefore would decrease the motivation of visitors as they progress through the museum. Conversely, having a wide variety of information can draw in more visitors, but it comes at the cost of visitors' motivation and increased difficulty in finding meaning and value of the museum experience. As Sheena and Iyengar and Mark Lepper's study concluded that mirrors the effect of distraction, "... although having more choices might appear desirable, it may sometimes have detrimental consequences for human motivation."⁹ For house museums having a variety of objects and content will increase motivation for visitors to visit the museum through programs and events, but having a variety of objects and content in one visit will cause visitors to experience distractions hurting their engagement. Like any experience both educational and experiential motivation is important.



"The Jam Study"
demonstrates how having
a higher amount of choices
in a product does not
mean more people will be
motivated to find value in
the product.

In small historic house museums, mental and physical fatigue are not the biggest problem to visitor motivation because "Most historic houses are small compared with other museums and physical and mental fatigue are less likely to build up during the visit."¹⁰ The most likely phenomena present in historic houses are object satiation and distraction. Object satiation is where visitors are given a high consumption rate of information with a lack of variety. "The lack of visual variety and stimulation decreases the motivation of visitors." This connects to the ratio of benefits where visitors constantly choose whether to sustain their engagement to the collection or to become less engaged with the collection. Reducing museum fatigue is important because it is a demotivator to visitors and is detrimental to visitor's intended learning experiences. Therefore, it is important to address the needs of visitors through satisfactory experiences through aesthetics to promote the meaning and value of a museum.

8. Stephen Bitgood in discussion with author, April 2019.

9. Sheena S. Iyengar and Mark R. Lepper, "When Choice is Demotivating: Can One Desire Too Much of a Good Thing?," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 79, No. 6 (2000), [https://faculty.washington.edu/jdb/345/345%20Articles/Iyengar%20%26%20Lepper%20\(2000\).pdf](https://faculty.washington.edu/jdb/345/345%20Articles/Iyengar%20%26%20Lepper%20(2000).pdf).

10. Sheena S. Iyengar [https://faculty.washington.edu/jdb/345/345%20Articles/Iyengar%20%26%20Lepper%20\(2000\).pdf](https://faculty.washington.edu/jdb/345/345%20Articles/Iyengar%20%26%20Lepper%20(2000).pdf).

In aesthetics, John Dewey understood the importance of experiences to create a more impactful in learning experiences. Using aesthetic experiences museums can create more meaningful and valued learning experiences for visitors. An aesthetic experience is an engaging activity that allows an individual to explore through learning rather than obtaining surface level thinking. As Stephen Biscotte explained, "While producing, the artist (participant) does not just observe but, rather, perceives the world through advancing 'active exploration.'"¹¹ Aesthetics is an experience that is pleasing to visitors because it connects to their prior knowledge helps sustain or increase their motivation to explore new concepts and ideas.



Using aesthetics is comparable to doing a science experiment rather than having a lecture on science.

Aesthetics is a deeper level of learning rather surface level learning. Museums, specifically historic house museums, creates memorable experiences through its physical environment. Visitors learn from the physical environment where aesthetics instills meaning and value to the physical environment of the museum through their prior knowledge and its connection to their everyday life. How this connection begins is due to it being visually or experientially pleasing.

Aesthetics is an artistic experience. Which can be an object, a physical environment, an activity, or a piece of architecture. This visually or experientially pleasing aesthetic experience creates a connection to visitors motivating them to actively explore the physical environment of the museum. As Sally Armstrong Gradle explained, "... Artistic activity is self-sustaining when it comes from a deep connection to experience [prior knowledge]..."¹² The steps for visitors to have an aesthetic experience is for visitors to have an "intelligent action" and a activity with the physical environment of the museum. The activity can be a conversation with the docent to an interactive experience. What is important is that visitors choose what to engage in and build upon their prior experiences through an activity. When aesthetics is not present, "the experience that lacks continuity, fulfillment, and consummation is not 'an experience.' Learning is absent; growth is stunted."¹³

11. Stephen Biscotte, "The Necessity of Teaching for Aesthetic Learning Experiences in Undergraduate General Education Science," *The Journal of General Education* 64, no. 3 (2015): 242-56. doi:10.5325/jgeneeduc.64.3.0242.

12. Sally Armstrong Gradle, "John Dewey and Henry Schaefer-Simmern: The Wholeness of Artistic Activity," *International Journal of Education through Art* 10, no. 1 (March 2014): 82. doi:10.1386/eta.10.1.71_1.

13. Stephen Biscotte, "The Necessity of Teaching for Aesthetic Learning Experiences in Undergraduate General Education Science," *The Journal of General Education* 64, no. 3 (2015): 242-56. doi:10.5325/jgeneeduc.64.3.0242.

Aesthetics is a part of visitors motivation to learn this presents the question, then what exactly is motivation?

Paris describes motivation as, “not simply a function of whether the person ‘has’ adequate motivation because motivation does not vary in amount as much as it varies in the likelihood of expression in specific situations.”¹⁴ Paris situates these motivational behaviors into a format of the six C’s: constructing meaning, choices, challenges, control, collaboration, and positive consequences. What is important for this study is the motivational behavior of choices. Paris defines choices as the motivational behavior where visitors choose what they want to learn and through their pursuit they refine their own mastery of their choice. Choices are characterized through feelings such as enjoyment, involvement, and values attributing the significance of the activity. Aesthetics relates to this motivational behavior through its use of intelligent action engage into the museum experience aiding the enjoyment and value of a museum’s objects and architecture. This concept is related to the ratio of benefits. The more costs perceived (time, effort) the less motivated visitors are specifically visitors’ intrinsic motivation.



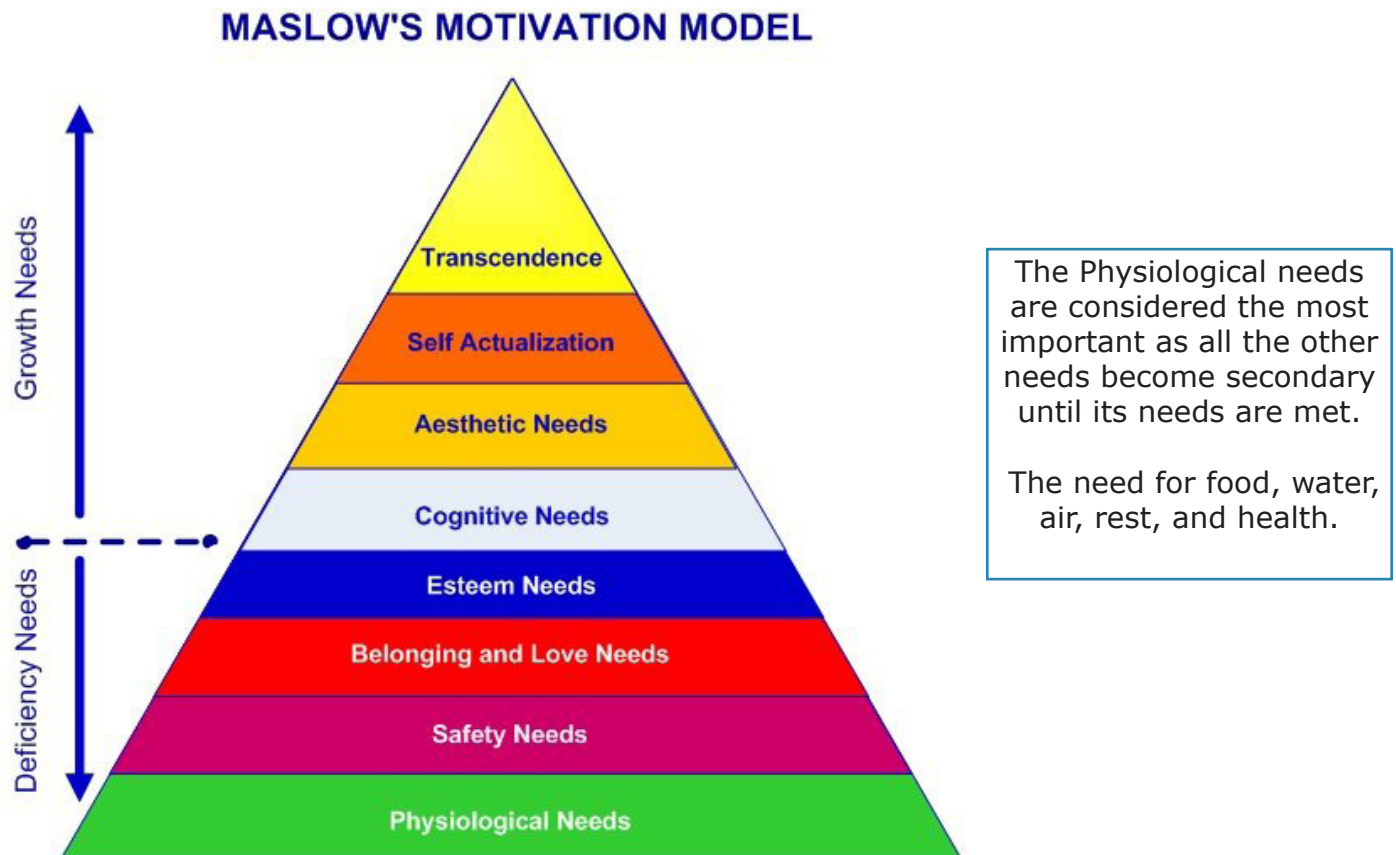
Visitors choose what they want to learn and through their pursuit they refine their own mastery of their choice.

“Intrinsic motivation is our natural engagement in activities that we seek out or because we want to expand our capacity and be challenged.”¹⁵ Museum fatigue’s phenomena object satiation, distraction, mental exhaustion, and physical exhaustion can impede visitor’s choices through the amount of enjoyment in the physical environment, involvement they will have, and meaning and value they can obtain from the objects and architecture. All these impediments into visitors’ motivational behavior of choices lowers visitors’ intrinsic motivation. A visitor’s motivation to choose what they want to learn could be limited in the amount or variety of information present in the museum. Designing the physical environment of a museum and its experiences that adhere to all the visitors’ intrinsic motivation is difficult for one visit. It is their experiences in the museum that defines if their motivation to visit can be sustained. These experiences are affected by museum fatigue due to the lack or little comforts provided during their visit.

14. Scott G. Paris, “Situating Motivation and Informal Learning,” *The Journal of Museum Education* 22, no. 2/3 (1997) <http://0-www.jstor.org.catalog.library.uarts.edu/stable/40479100>.

15. James Schreiber, *Motivation 101*, New York: Springer Publishing Company: 2016. <http://0-search.ebscohost.com.catalog.library.uarts.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=e000xna&AN=1436265&site=eds-live&scope=site>.

Comfort is a factor in a visitor's experience, "good comfort opens the door to other positive experiences. Lack of comfort prevents them."¹⁶ Being comfortable in the museum environment opens-up visitors to learn and experience more. Seating is one of the many ways visitors can obtain comfort during their visit. As Joan Madden describes comfort beyond places of rest as, "... the ambiance, level of noise and light, style of language, and variety of information."¹⁷ Museum fatigue occurs when there is a lack of comfort. Without comfort, the visitor's ability motivation to learn will be impaired. Providing portable seating that visitors can access any time during their tour can increase the motivation of visitors and reduce museum fatigue by providing comfort. This is also indicated through Maslow's motivation model. Comfort adheres to the physiological needs of visitors specifically the need for rest. Rest is a part of the basic needs of visitors and without having their basic needs met they cannot function and learn optimally. Fulfilling the physiological needs is the most important as all other needs in the Motivation Model become secondary until it is met. Only by museums meeting or going above the expectations and needs of visitors can help increase the motivation of visitors to engage in their guided tour. Visitors have the free choice to the extent they engage in a tour but providing comfort will allow visitors to engage in the tour easier due to having one of their most basic needs met to learn in their most optimal state. Visitors' motivational behavior of choice dictates the amount of enjoyment, involvement, and value in the physical environment of the museum. Allowing the visitors to be in their most optimal state allows visitors to continue to be motivated to learn about the objects and architecture of a museum.



16. Kathleen McLean and Wendy Pollock, *The Convivial Museum*, Association of Science-Technology Centers Inc., 2010. <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=cat04417a&AN=art.b1215168&site=eds-live&scope=site>.

17. Joan C. Madden, "To Realize Our Museums' Full Potential." *The Journal of Museum Education* 10, no. 4 (1985): 3-16. [http://0-www.jstor.org/catalog.library.uarts.edu/stable/40478670](http://0-www.jstor.org/catalog/library.uarts.edu/stable/40478670).

House museums have a huge variety of physical environments both inside and outside. The most optimal amount of information and stimulation a visitor can take is within the length of the visitors' hands spread horizontally. This optimal volume is called space volume.¹⁸ If an exhibit is designed following the visitors' space volume then the visitor will be relaxed and have their full potential to assimilate information. House museums cannot always adhere to space volume because they are restricted to the design of a house. For example, the Ebenezer Maxwell Mansion is a Victorian-era mansion and the inside is designed to look as it was during the Victorian-era. The entire guided tour experience cannot be around areas that adhere to the space volume. Therefore, visitors of house museums will not be completely relaxed and will need their entire attention to be directed by the docent. Portable seating can be a tool to provide comfort to visitors' perception by allowing visitors to set-up their space volume. With portable seating, visitors are not as restricted in their movement in the physical environment while obtaining comfort. It is to be noted there is also a variety of information and stimulation including materials, sounds, the openness of an exhibit area, and light that will often break this space volume. Space volume does affect a guided tour's experience, but all these types of stimulation are outside of this study's scope and should be investigated by others for further research.



Information can be understood effectively when it adheres to the space volume.

Perceiving information outside of the space volume is relatively more difficult mentally making an experience more uncomfortable and harder for an individual to understand the presented information.

The physical environment of a museum can affect the physical processes associated with learning through, "Cognitive fatigue, distraction, motivation, emotional affect, and anxiety..."¹⁹ Museum professionals must understand their audience to mitigate anxiety and fatigue as well as maintain the motivation of visitors. Within the user-centered design, there are four distinct phases: context, requirements, design, and evaluation. The museum professional of an exhibit tries to understand the motivation of visitors by what they do within the exhibit. Then, they find the requirements or problems that the visitors experience. Next, they design a solution to the problem. Finally, they evaluate whether the solution satisfies the visitors' needs. Afterward, they make further iterations repeating the four phases each time. In this case for my study, it is by using the small edit of adding portable seating in the house museum guided tour to affects visitors' motivation and how they obtain meaning and value in the collection.

18. Lauren Duguid in discussion with author, April 2019.

19. Lorraine E. Maxwell and Gary W. Evans. "Museums as Learning Settings: The Importance of the Physical Environment." *The Journal of Museum Education* 27, no. 1 (2002): 3-7. <http://0-www.jstor.org.catalog.library.uarts.edu/stable/40479225>.

As an educator, it is important to understand the motivation of visitors, find solutions to problems occurring in the exhibit, and evaluating the extent of portable seating in reducing museum fatigue. This iterative design process of adding and editing the physical environment of an exhibit is beneficial. As James Vergeront states, "...the physical environment is a vast and ready resource to help learners be competent, curious, inquisitive, or observant."²⁰ Museum professionals should align the museum environment to help learners be competent, curious, inquisitive, or observant. If they cannot change the environment, then change how they can interact with the environment to best fit the visitor's basic needs such as rest. This can be done by adding to or editing the museum's existing physical environment or develop a tool to make the interaction with the physical environment easier and more comfortable to the visitor. The development of a physical environment is an ongoing process. Museum professionals should analyze visitors' experiences and develop their environment in ways to better interact with the environment based on their analysis. As Marcella Wells described in *Interpretive Planning for Museums*, "One highly desirable goal for museums is the complete institutionalization of an audience or visitor-centered approach into all phases of project planning and development."²¹ Evaluating whether the museum is visitor-centered will allow museum professionals, such as those in house museums, ways to have a more engaging and meaningful visitor experience without the effects of museum fatigue.

Seating is part of the museum's physical environment and is a tool used to aid visitors to better interact with the physical environment. Therefore, it must be taken into consideration when designing exhibits and providing tours. Seating use goes beyond placing them in locations such as lobbies, cafés, and viewing or reading stations. They should be used in locations that are carefully chosen and designed to make visitors comfortable but does not distract them in engaging with the objects in the museum. Portable seating is a new iteration into the use of seating due to its flexibility the ability to move with the visitor throughout their tour of the museum. Kenneth Hudson argued that "The museum of the future should be a place which emphasizes the value and the necessity of sitting down, to digest, reflect, and discuss what one has seen."²² Providing more seating in exhibit spaces can encourage visitors to slow their pace and create opportunities to obtain a better understanding of a museum's collection by setting-up their space volume as well as providing comfort. Providing portable seating to visitors is a solution to create similar opportunities as installed seating, but with the benefit of greater flexibility for visitors to move with a tour. As David Whitemyer said about seating in the design process of exhibitions in museums: "design [seating] into the exhibition floor plan, and commit to keeping them there, even when the desire to add more artifacts or content puts them on the chopping block. . . It would be nice if, during the design of an exhibition, benches got the same amount of attention as things such as wall colors and lighting."²³ When museums cannot install benches or permanent seating, such as house museums, they still should think about seating in their design of the exhibition because portable seating can be used as a substitute. Seating is a comfort tool that can both useful and important to the reduction of museum fatigue if used appropriately.

20. Jeanne. Vergeront, "Shaping Spaces for Learners and Learning," *The Journal of Museum Education* 27, no. 1 (2002): 8-13. <http://0-www.jstor.org.catalog.library.uarts.edu/stable/40479226>.

21. Marcella D. Wells, Judith Koke, and Barbara H. Butler, *Interpretive Planning for Museums: Integrating Visitor Perspectives in Decision Making*, (California: Left Coast Press 2013) <http://0-search.ebscohost.com.catalog.library.uarts.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=506653&site=eds-live&scope=site>.

22. Kenneth Hudson, "The Right and Wrong Road for Museums," unpublished article, 1995.

23. David Whitemyer, "Where the Seats Have No Name: In Defense of Museum Benches," *American Alliance of Museums*, October 18, (2018) <https://www.aam-us.org/2018/10/19/where-the-seats-have-no-name-in-defense-of-museum-benches/>.

Seating has many uses within the physical environment of an exhibit. To the extent of space volume, seating is highly recommended. When visitors interact within their space volume, they will be interacting with the exhibit space in a meaningful way that maintains both the visitor motivation and learning experience. As Lauren Duguid explains about space volume, for a visitor interacting within the exhibit space for longer than a minute it is highly recommended to provide seating to be given time to process the information presented.²⁴ This can be the case when the visitor is watching an exhibit presenting a video and when there is an activity area within the exhibit. Guided tours can be included in this practice in space volume because interaction with the docent is longer than a minute, especially when a visitor is engaged with an object or piece of information. Therefore, an optimal amount of time a visitor needs to use seating should be around a minute at a time. The use of seating does not have to always be educational in its purpose. Seating is highly recommended with an exhibit space that caters to children as caregivers will sometimes allow children to learn by themselves. Children also experience museum fatigue at a faster pace than adults due to children experiencing physical fatigue faster. Children have less prior knowledge so they will also experience higher mental fatigue due the information presented being almost all new information to them. Seating can aid in sustaining children's motivation because it provides comfort to the children. Comfort fulfills children's physiological needs for rest so that they can better learn at their most optimal state. Seating's overall purpose is to provide comfort to the visitor so they can stay longer in the exhibit and fulfill their physiological needs to more effectively learn without the distraction of physical or mental exhaustion.



Portable seating is a tool used to aid visitors to better interact with the physical environment.

Its use adds comfort to visitors in an uncomfortable environment by setting-up space volume for visitors.

24. Lauren Duguid in discussion with author, April 2019.

Current State

Case Study:

My case study includes Elfreth's Alley, which was a supplement to my observations and findings from my study at the Powel House and the Ebenezer Maxwell Mansion. During my study of the guided tours at Elfreth's Alley, I observed visitors' behaviors during the tour analyzing what made visitors engaged and what were their behaviors outside of the guided tour. I conducted interviews of volunteers and visitors asking, "what about Elfreth's Alley interests you the most and If you could change anything about your experience what could that be?" My observations of the guided tours showed that visitors were visibly more engaged during the tour when they were seeing something new or directed to look at a specific piece of architecture or object. This is due to visitors trying to perceive the aesthetics of the museum obtaining a connection to sustain their motivation and build upon their prior knowledge and experience. During the tour, visitors would not take a seat anywhere even if they were not visibly engaged. It was after the tour that visitors started sitting on the benches, steps to the houses, and dividers. From this case study and the behavior patterns of the Powel House and Ebenezer Maxwell Mansion, I have concluded that visitors do not sit or rest on the permanent seating during tours at Elfreth's whether they are engaged or not.

My interviews with the volunteers and visitors revealed what motivates visitors to visit Elfreth's Alley and what engages them during their visit. Visitors are motivated to visit and are engaged with the aesthetic of the museum specifically the objects and the architecture. The objects and the architecture must remain as authentic as possible to the historic events reported in the museum to meet the visitors' need for aesthetics. Visitors go to a historic house museum to be immersed in the era the museum is teaching. When being told in the museum at Elfreth's Alley that the objects inside were not from the time the house is depicted at the museum they were disappointed and reported their disappointment in the interview wanting more objects that were authentic to the time.



Elfreth's Alley

This case study demonstrates how important the visuals in the museum are to visitors. Visitors will be more visibly engaged when there is something to see that creates a connection to them. Visitors want to learn something new, but they need to have something visible sustain their motivation to allow them enjoyment, increased involvement, and find value in their learning. As stated before in the literature review about aesthetics, for visitors to grow in their learning they need experiences that allow them to make an “intelligent action” to interact with the physical environment of the museum and have an activity to involve themselves in the learning. In this case study, it was more of a lecture about the information at Elfreth’s Alley then experiencing and connecting with the history of Elfreth’s Alley. Aesthetics of the museum are important to visitors and from my observations, they are a deciding factor for visitors to engage during the guided tour.

Interviews:

In this study, I have conducted three interviews from museum professionals in the house museum field that handled the management and implementation of guided tours and education programs: Emilie Parker the director of education at the Rosenbach, Diane Richardson the executive director at the Ebenezer Maxwell Museum, and Ted Maust the associate director at the Elfreth’s Alley Association. From the interviews, each house museum has very similar education goals to intellectually stimulate visitors to be motivated to ask questions and connect to their prior knowledge and expertise. Each individual that I interviewed had very similar assertions as to how they would define engagement in their guided tours. It is defined by the visitor spending more time conversationally engaged with the docent demonstrating their engagement. This is a visual indicator that the visitor is having a satisfying museum experience. In addition, they all indicated they rely on foldable chairs for programs and events because of their usefulness to be easily movable and can be added or subtracted in a room depending on the number of guests. This asserts that portable seating is very much a part of the physical environment in a house museum. Portable seating is present in historic house museums due to its flexibility to be able to be moved when needed for programs, activities, and tours. All the individuals in my interviews saw the positives of portable seating and were very interested in the outcome of my study. This shows there is an interest in adding comfort to visitors to provide more opportunities for visitors to engage in their guided tours.

Thesis Project

Description:

My main goal for this project is to evaluate the benefits of portable seating in guided tours at house museums. This study tries to answer the question, "does providing portable seating have a noticeable effect on visitors museum fatigue?" As indicated in the literature review, there are many ways that can reduce the motivation of visitors. Portable seating could possibly be a solution to this motivation problem in guided tours. The other goals of this study are to evaluate the motivation, museum fatigue, and educational outcomes of guided tours in house museums. Therefore, to refine my study and obtain the most accurate data I limited the audience of this study to adults participating in a guided tour in the museum.

Methodology:

The problem that is occurring to visitors during guided tours at house museums is the onset of museum fatigue. Informed through the articles by Stephen Bitgood I decided to test one of his possible solutions to relieve museum fatigue by providing seating. To make sure visitors make use of seating I decided to use portable seating because of its lightweight and the flexibility to be used as a cane instead of exclusively being something to sit on. The study was conducted in two phases. The first phase is the baseline experience of guided tours. Visitors were not provided portable seating and the visit was what they would typically experience at a house museum guided tour. In this study, I observe visitor behaviors during their tour watching out for visible indicators of visitors being engaged in a tour: eye contact with the docent, proximity to the docent, body language, and how active visitors are in conversation with the docent. These visible indicators inform the level of comfort the visitor has during the tour. The less comfortable the visitor is the lower their motivation is to engage in the tour, hurting the overall museum experience. At the end of the tour, I provided the surveys to gather data on their perceived motivation, museum fatigue, museum experience, and education outcomes.

During the second phase of the study, all visitors were given portable seating and told to use it throughout their tour. I would then observe their behaviors watching out for the same indicators of museum fatigue as well as the ways they made use of the seating. At the end of the tour, visitors were given the same survey as visitors from phase one. From the data in the surveys, I examined if the portable seating was successful in alleviating museum fatigue by the visitors' answers on their mental and physical exhaustion. The observations also informed my study of how visitors reacted differently during their guided tour with carrying and using portable seating. The data and observations combined demonstrate the benefits of portable seating and the possible drawbacks to its use in historic house museums. This then informs my recommendations on how to optimally use portable seating in guided tours. Using the method of user-centered design the study provided data to the extent of portable seating as a solution to the museum fatigue occurring in the exhibit and evaluate the specific phenomena of museum fatigue portable seating reduces.

Observations:

During the study, I had several observations of visitors at both the Powel House and Ebenezer Maxwell Mansion observing how made use of the physical environment of the museums as well as their visible indicators engagement. In my observations at the Powel House of visitors without portable seating, I observed several tendencies of visitors. That during the guided tour visitors tend to not use the permanent seating in the house museum. In the entire study, only one visitor used the permanent seating and it was the ballroom at the Powel House. This is significant due to most of the visitors using the portable seating also used it when they were in the ballroom. This is most likely due to the ballroom being the biggest room in the Powel House as well as being the perfect space for visitors to sit down while still being able to observe all the objects within the room. This does show that visitors during a guided tour even if they are experiencing visible signs of exhaustion, lack of eye contact with the docent, and uncomfortable body language are most likely not going to use the seating permanent. Another tendency of visitors is that visitors no matter how visibly engaged they are at the beginning of the tour by the end of the tour their visible engagement would be the lowest. At the end of the tour, visitors would speak less asking fewer questions and conversations with the docent. This can be attributed to visitors experiencing more physical or mental exhaustion at the end of the tour and are motivated to choose to engage less due to exhaustion. Similar to the Powel House, the Ebenezer Maxwell Mansion the observed visitors without seating also did not make use of the permanent seating in the museum and unlike the Powel House there were no cases of any visitors using the permanent seating once. Another similarity is that visitors also experienced visible signs of exhaustion by the end of the tour. This draws the conclusion that visitors tend to not use permanent seating during the guided tour and that by the end of the tour, around forty-five minutes to one hour, visitors will be experiencing visible signs of exhaustion becoming less likely to engage with the docent and the objects in the museum.



Powel House-Ballroom



Ebenezer Maxwell Mansion-Children's room

Being provided portable seating visitors were observed to act similarly to visitors without seating. In most cases, visitors would use portable seating in the ballroom at the Powel House. This may be due to the amount of time visitors have in the room is enough for them to make of the seating, as indicated in the literature review around one minute. As well as having enough space to use the portable seating while still being able to observe all the objects in the room. The rooms that were observed to have visitors use the portable seating were rooms that followed this rule of having enough time and space. For the most part, visitors tended to not make use of the portable seating carrying it around and leaning on it occasionally. Visitors would experience visible signs of exhaustion even if they are using the portable seating as a cane. The visible exhaustion was observed the highest at the last room at the end of the guided tour which comparable to visitors observed without portable seating. The use of portable seating was even worse with the case was one visitor wanted a quick guided tour of thirty minutes. This rush through the tour made her not use the portable seating at all as a seat or a cane to lean on. She held the seat in the air for the entire thirty minutes, but she did not experience visible signs of exhaustion because of her rush to complete the tour quickly. The Ebenezer Maxwell Mansion had no cases where the visitors used the portable seating as a seat this could be due to not having enough space or time to use the seating during the guided tour.

Similar to the Powel House visitors did show visible signs of exhaustion and were the most pronounced at the last room of the tour. From all of the observations, I can make the claim that providing portable seating does not remove the visible signs of exhaustion, that visitors will tend to never use the permanent seating during a guided tour, and will only use the provided portable seating when they have the time and space to use it. I believe permanent seating was perceived as disengaging from the tour rather than providing comfort, therefore visitors deciding to never use the permanent seating. This could be due to the permanent seating always being placed in the corner of the room away from the guided tour and all of the objects in the room. Portable seating was overall more flexible for visitors where they could use the seating while still engaging themselves in the guided tour. Even if the visitor has the time and space there is no guarantee that they will make use of the portable seating as a seat, but with it there was a higher likelihood of the seating being used.

Findings

Implementation:

Museum fatigue occurs in historic house museums. This is due to the comfort problems within the physical environment. Using seating was one of the viable solutions to alleviate the phenomena of museum fatigue. From my research, I understood the specific phenomena of museum fatigue that occurs in historic house museums are mental exhaustion, object satiation, and distraction. That for visitors to obtain the most optimal museum experience and learning the physical environment needs to be considered, specifically the aesthetics and space volume of visitors. House museums cannot remove or rearrange objects within their physical environment, so a viable solution needs to be added to the physical environment without occupying the already full space. Portable seating is a viable solution because of its flexibility in the inflexible physical environment of a house museum. Portable seating is light, easy to carry, and occupies very little space.

Museum fatigue is a comfort issue and seating are a tool that adds comfort so that visitors can be at the most optimal state in their motivation and learning.

My implementation of portable seating by observing and analyzing its viability in reducing museum fatigue and the circumstances that portable seating should be used. Portable seating does represent a solution for reducing museum fatigue, but to be viable it needs to follow the condition that visitors remain able to view and have time to interact with the objects and the architecture during the tour. If the implementation of portable seating removes or edits from the original unique aesthetic of the museum and reduces or goes above the length of visitors' space volume, then they will be less engaged in the museum and have a negative overall museum experience. The collection of the museum are a part of visitors' motivation to visit and remain engaged in the museum, therefore the portable

Observations:

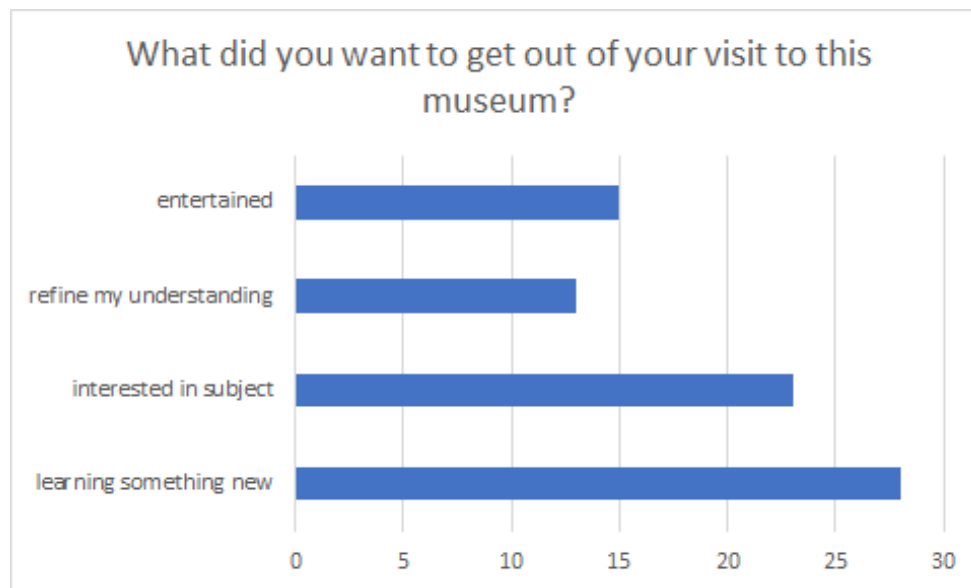
My solution to using portable seating was received favorably from staff and visitors, but both were concerned for individuals who could not hold or carry around the portable seating during the guided tour due to a disability. When it came to the overall experience during the guided tours many visitors approved of being provided portable seating due to the extra comfort that its implementation provided. While some visitors were worried about its use because it limited the number of hands that they could use during the tour. This does show that portable seating as a solution for museum fatigue is not universal to for all visitors.

In the implementation process I gained several insights about visitor behavior and engagement during guided tours. One important insight that I found in both testing sites where visitors were studied without portable seating is that not all visitors made use of the permanent seating during the guided tour. If the space already had seating installed for visitors, the visitors do not use the seating during the guided tour. Another important insight is that during the tour visitors are always looking for something to be visually engaged with that connects to their prior knowledge and experience. As explained through John Dewey's concept of aesthetics indicates that when visitors are able to view objects or architecture within the museum environment that creates a satisfactory experience it will initiate visitors' motivation building upon their prior knowledge and experiences allowing visitors to obtain a sense of meaning and value to objects and architecture. Many visitors that visited the surveyed house museums have frequently visited or volunteer at other historic house museums. They are more engaged when they can use the objects and architecture that they observed at the house museum to learn something new. The objects and architecture at the house museums are important for visitors to remain engaged throughout the duration of the tour, therefore when using the portable seating visitors chose to use the seating when they had the time and space to use it. Compared to the Powel House more visitors were more visibly engaged to the docent at the Maxwell Mansion this can be due to the Maxwell Mansion having more opportunities for aesthetic experiences than the Powel House. The Powel House had more opportunities for visitors to use of portable seating and obtain its benefits to their comfort. This shows that visitors desire to be immersed to the aesthetic of the house museum. Therefore, when implementing portable seating, museum professionals need to consider the space so that visitors can still view all the objects without obstructions. As well as the amount of time visitors used for the seating to interact with the objects.

Summative Evaluation:

I formally evaluated the proposed solution of using portable seating to alleviate museum fatigue through two ways — surveys at the end of the tour and observations. The surveys evaluated the visitors overall museum experience, their motivation, and the extent of the mental and physical exhaustion at the beginning and end of the tour. I compared the surveys and observations of the visitors tested with portable seating and without portable seating. Throughout the testing process I understood that many visitors even if given portable seating would not use it as a seat, so I evaluated how they used portable seating and the circumstances allowed the visitor to use the portable seating as a seat. Both testing sites, Powel and Maxwell Mansion, had very different physical environments. Powel House's physical environment and most objects hung on the walls or put sparingly on the tables in the rooms. In comparison Maxwell Mansion had more rooms, but the space inside the rooms were significantly smaller. Maxwell Mansion also had more objects in each room compared to Powel House. When evaluating my proposed solution, both sites' data was evaluated understanding their different physical environment.

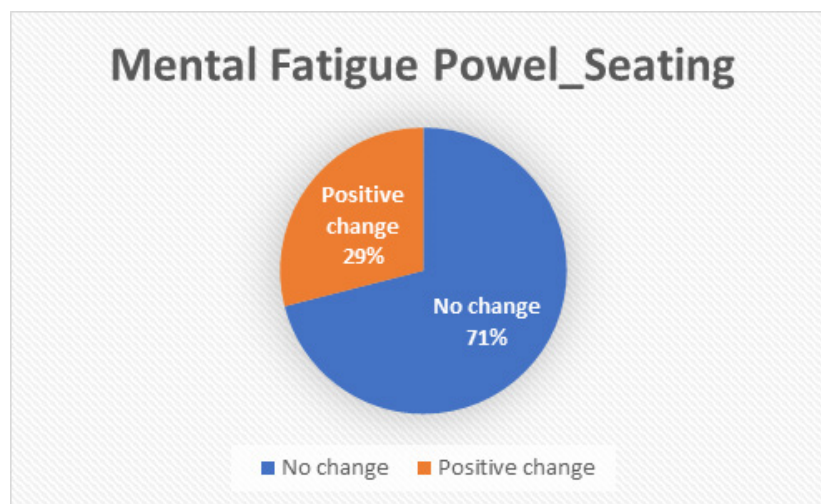
In my surveys (in appendix), I asked questions regarding their motivation for visiting the house museum such as wanting to learn something new, interested in the subject matter of the museum, refine their current understanding of the subject matter of the museum, and experience new things while being entertained.



In both locations combined visitors reported the most in their surveys that they were motivated to visit the house museum because they wanted to learn something new.

With this information house museums should provide connections in their museum that will allow for visitors to learn something new. Also, in my survey I had visitors scale their mental and physical exhaustion at the beginning and end of the tour as well as their level of concentration, engagement, mental and physical comfort, and opportunities to ask questions. For my observations I was observing their visible signs of engagement as well as when visitors started to lose those visible signs of engagement to uncomfortable body language.

The key findings from the surveys and observations is that when visitors do use the portable seating as a seat, they reported of having less mental exhaustion for their overall museum experience. If the space was limited or the time for visitors to observe the room was short then visitors would not have the opportunity to use the portable seating and the effectiveness of the seating would be no comparative difference between with and without portable seating. This makes the solution of portable seating conditional that visitors have the opportunity and willingness to use the provided seating.



The Powel House surveys on visitors provided with portable seating reported a 29% positive change in their mental fatigue and reported no negative change. This showed that when portable seating is used it does reduce mental exhaustion.

Analysis of Findings:

My study was very successful in showing how providing portable seating can be a possible solution for alleviating museum fatigue, but on the condition that the provided seating has enough time and space within the guided tour to be used by visitors. My study was also successful in showing what visitors want to engage with during a guided tour. Visitors are motivated to visit museums due to their unique subject and space. So, to allow visitors to obtain meaning and value of objects and architecture in the museum steps need to be taken to provide comfort for visitors. Adhering to the comfort of visitors through space volume and providing opportunities to rest will allow visitors to have their optimum ability to learn, enjoy, interact, and find value in the physical environment in the physical space of a museum.

The study increased my understanding of making a museum environment more visitor-centered. Comfort is just one way museums can be more visitor-centered, but its implementation is circumstantial to the physical environment of the museums. Museum fatigue is a comfort issue. Under museum fatigue, the physical environment of the museum creates obstacles, either mental or physical, for visitor comfort reducing their engagement and their overall museum experience. Through my study, I learned that using portable seating in guided tours alleviates mental exhaustion rather than physical exhaustion which is different from the popular belief that seating should alleviate physical exhaustion. This shows that within house museums providing comfort through portable seating is a more effective mental decompressor rather than physical. Visitors may have looked visibly uncomfortable during the tour, but through the surveys, they reported mostly as no change for their physical exhaustion. Visitors want to be visually engaged as a scaffold to their prior knowledge and experiences this is accomplished through aesthetics. If visitors are just recited information without visuals to interest them, they will be less engaged. Another key information I learned is that for house museums with guided tours visitors will hardly use the permanent seating. Portable seating was observed to be more flexible in its use and had visitors make use of the seating without losing the ability to continue to engage with the docent and the objects in the room. I believe visitors were probably perceiving permanent seating as disengaging with the tour rather than its intended use of providing comfort. Portable seating kept visitors' perception that even if they sat down, they could still engage in the tour.

Through this study, I have developed three recommendations for other museums that alleviate museum fatigue. **1)** Adding more comfort to visitors is important, but a museum should not remove or lessen what makes the museum unique for the sake of comfort. Visitors are motivated to visit specific museums because of what makes them unique. The museum should always remain authentic. Every museum has something that makes it unique from other museums. Such as how their information is presented, the look of the museum, and its activities. **2)** When implementing seating take into consideration the time and space. Seating will only be used when the visitor knows they have the space to use it and can still be able to observe all or most of the objects in the room. The visitor also needs to have the time to use the seating. In a guided tour, is there enough time for a visitor to take a seat for a minute or more? **3)** Make the experience comfortable. There are many reasons why visitors could be uncomfortable, but a museum should try to take some steps to add more comfort to the physical environment of museums. This could be more than just providing seating. It could be making changes to the physical environment, that does not lessen the aesthetics, to allow visitors to interact with the physical environment easier. Museum fatigue is a museum field problem because it is a comfort problem for visitors. Using portable seating is just one of many possible solutions to alleviate museum fatigue.

Conclusion:

This study shows how small edits in the physical environment of a house museum can be impactful to the motivation and learning of visitors. This comes with the condition that the changes made do not affect visitors' ability to experience the aesthetic of the museum because it would affect how visitors obtain meaning and value of the objects and architecture of the museum. Portable seating is a small edit that is impactful in reducing museum fatigue, specifically the mental exhaustion of visitors when visitors used the portable seating as a seat. It was also observed that visitors will not use the portable seating as a seat unless they have the time and space to use the seating effectively. This can be an explanation of why the portable seating that was currently present in the rooms during the guided tour was not used because visitors perceived they would not be able to fully experience the room and its aesthetics if they were in a corner of the room.

This relates to the museum industry because it shows that making small changes to what visitors experience at a museum can be impactful to their overall museum experience and ease of learning. That taking into consideration of the visitor's comfort needs is beneficial and is worthy of making edits even when the interaction with the physical environment is only an hour to thirty minutes long. This changes the way museum professionals think about best practices in museums and specifically historic house museums that visitor comfort should be taken into consideration due to its benefits to visitors' learning. Visitors would experience less museum fatigue by alleviating their physiological needs, specifically rest, they can reach their full potential in their learning by having their motivation sustain or increase rather than diminish throughout a visit. Museum professionals should never stop thinking about how to provide visitors the best experience.

For Further Research:

For further research, the next steps for my study would be providing the docents portable seating as well as the visitors. This would allow a change in how visitors perceive using the portable seating by having their guided tour follow at the same pace as the docent as well as allowing docents to have conversations with visitors while sitting down. I believe that would put less pressure on visitors in their decision making whether they want to use the seating or not. Another step would be measuring the effects of portable seating in larger museums. This is due to the physical environment being very different from historic house museums, therefore its effects on visitor motivation and use could also be different. I also would like to ask visitors what they want in their museum experience to make it more comfortable and whether their solutions to provide can be tested in its effectiveness. Some questions that this study generated that could be considered for further exploration are what circumstances the portable seating should be provided? The study did not give the visitors the choice of whether to use portable seating or not, so given the choice would they realistically use it.

Therefore, another set of questions for further study would be why do visitors do not use portable seating, how can one train docents to incorporate permanent seating into their tours, and are there other solutions that provide visitors comfort besides portable seating? Finally, what would happen if the portable seating was provided in a larger space? Many historic house museums have a larger space than the Powel House and the Ebenezer Maxwell Mansion that would allow visitors more opportunities to use the portable seating. Would the positive effect on reducing mental exhaustion be more pronounced?

Thesis Committee:

Chair:

Emilie Parker- Director of Education, The Rosenbach

Current Committee Members:

Michel Maley- Museum Education Program Lead, University of the Arts

Diane Richardson- Executive Director, Ebenezer Maxwell Mansion

Advisors:

Stephen Bitgood- Professor Emeritus of Psychology, Jacksonville University

William McNichol- Adjunct Professor, Rutgers University

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Appendix I

Tour Survey:

Demographic Information:

Zip code _____

Age _____

How many times have you visited a museum in three months _____

Have you visited other museums today or are you going to another museum after your visit at this museum today?

Yes No Other _____

What did you want to get out of your visit to this museum? Check all that apply

____ Museums are interesting, and I like to learn and experience new things in museums.

____ I am visiting this museum because I am interested in the museum's subject matter.

____ I am visiting because I want to refine my understanding of the specific subject matter present in the museum.

____ I want to experience new things while being entertained with myself/group members.

Please circle the number that best fits your experience before and after your guided tour at the museum. From 1-10, 1 being extremely tired and 10 being not tired at all.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Mentally tired at the beginning of the tour.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Physically tired at the beginning of the tour.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Mentally tired at the end of the tour.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Physically tired at the end of the tour.

On a scale from 1 to 10, please rate your experience during your guided tour.

Highly distracted		High concentration
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	It was easy to concentrate during the tour.	
Not engaged		Highly engaged
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	I was engaged with the docent during the tour.	
Not comfortable at all		Very comfortable
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	I was mentally comfortable during the tour.	
Not comfortable at all		Very comfortable
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	I was physically comfortable during the tour.	
No opportunities		Many opportunities
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	I felt that I had a lot of opportunities to ask questions.	

In this tour, what information that you learned surprised you:

Comments on your tour experience: (optional)

Appendix II

Interview Transcript:

Emilie Parker, the Director of Education at The Rosenbach

What are the education goals of your museum?

-Make visitors feel intellectually and physically comfortable.

What are the experience goals of your museum?

-Our experience goals are to meet the goals visitors' goals. To allow visitors to be curious enough to learn more endorsing their intellectual curiosity. We also want our visitors to talk with other people in their tours. We want visitors to have conversations with their tour guide where they can learn together and share the comfort through conversation.

How would you define engagement in your institution?

-I would define engagement if someone is visually engaged and to be conversationally engaged as well.

How is seating used in your institution?

-I would try to provide seating everywhere we can. We reinstalled the seating in our lobby space. We are having trouble finding space to incorporate seating, but we try to install at least one in each space. We have tables and chairs where they can have seats to rest on and encourage engagement to visitors. There are chessboard and chairs where visitors can engage with each other in the Alice exhibit. Space is an issue at the Rosenbach we can only have a maximum of 10 portable seats but cannot set 10 seats in each space. We let visitors know if they need seating accommodations. The portable seating is used in a as needed basis, but we would like to have permanent seats at the museum.

What is your experience of seating in your institution and how has it changed?

-Historic house spaces do have seating opportunities, but they have limited space. For our public programs we have purchased more comfortable seating specifically that is portable. Our institution has our portable seats to be stack, stored, and moved. I would prefer we expand our seating, but they need to be flexible and not permanent.

What are the biggest difficulties in guided tours?

-So much of the collection is behind glass, so visitors do not get to see everything. Our tours allow visitors to see inside one of the books in a glass case. We are trying to communicate that not everything in our collection is not on display. Advertising is the biggest hurdle because the Rosenbach does not have a big advertising budget, so advertising our tours often gets cut out.

If you could do anything for the guided tours what would that be?

-I would like a video advertisement on television. I would like to see what happens showing that our tours are not a walking lecture.

Ted Maust, the Associate Director at the Elfreth's Alley Association

What are the education goals of you museum?

-Our education goals are to allow their learning to be self-guided. We place most of the seating inside the house. We want to challenge the assumption visitors make about the 18th century. Through this challenge will spark questions.

What are the experience goals of your museum?

-Our experience goal is to immerse visitors into the 18th century from the architecture and museum.

How would you define engagement in your institution?

-Our engagement at Elfreth's Alley in is follows a passive model where a visitor will spend more time in an area that they choose. This engagement can happen be seen in so many ways. Some visitors spend hours in the costume closet at our museum.

What is your experience of seating in your institution and how has it changed?

-We have a few folding chairs throughout our museum exhibit. We also have tables and chairs in the garden that is the location where we observe use the seating the most. We have not made huge changes since five years, so we usually redeploy chairs around the Elfreth's Alley as needed.

What are the biggest difficulties in guided tours?

-Our only related tour is the walking tour, but most of the space includes the street. Very few space in the museum to have seating. The street at Elfreth's Alley has one bench so finding a place to sit is hard. Our museum is mainly formatted to be self-guided there is not a lot of opportunities for guided tours. We have very few volunteers so we do not have as much resources to constantly to guided tours that would be different from the walk-through model.

Diane Richardson, the Executive Director at the Ebenezer Maxwell Museum

What are the education goals of your museum?

-Our education goals are to showcase our mission. We have always done our programs based upon our mission. This includes our book club and our theater program.

What are the experience goals of your museum?

-We want our tours to more interactive. We are working for a more immersive experience to have kitchen sounds and call bells in our kitchen, 19th century music in the parlor, and take home a cookie from a 19th century recipe to create a more memorable experience for our guided tours.

How would you define engagement in your institution?

-I define engagement for our visitors to interact with our docents where they ask questions and try to learn more by talking to the docents as well as looking around.

How is seating used in your institution?

-We mainly use our seating for events, but there is difficulty moving exhibit seating for these because they are heavy. We have furniture in each room, but they are not for seating. We prefer folding chairs the most due to their light weight and ease of storage.

What is your experience of seating in your institution and how has it changed?

-Our seating has remained the same over the years. We do see older visitors do use the folding chairs. We do make sure that there is a folding chair in each room in the mansion.

What are the biggest difficulties in guided tours?

-Our biggest difficulties in guided tours is judging the level of interest and education of visitors as well as balancing the motivation and interest. We want to have visitors use their previous knowledge and experience, but it difficult to know if a visitor for example an interior decorator. Our greatest concern is the preservation of our collection.

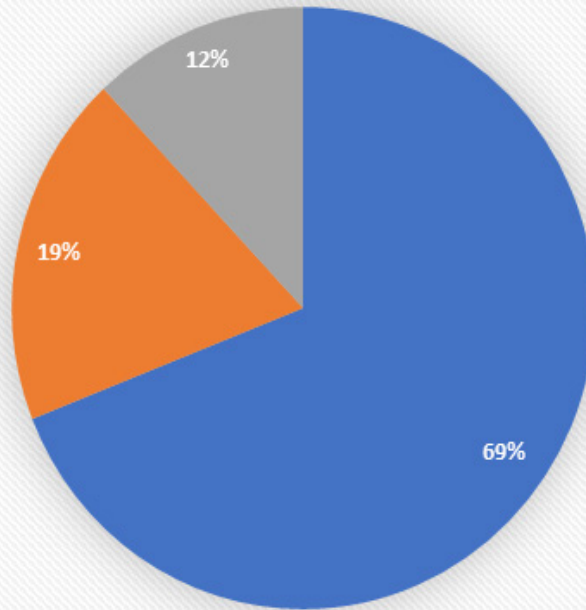
If you could do anything for the guided tours what would that be?

-I would like to get people to be interested a little more in the collection like having items visitors can touch. I also like to personalize the tour more. Which our intuition is currently doing with the "Deep Rivers" program that connects more to our African American audience. I would also like more pictures of people and what the mansion would look like in the 19th century. I would also like a little bit more information of the context of the time.

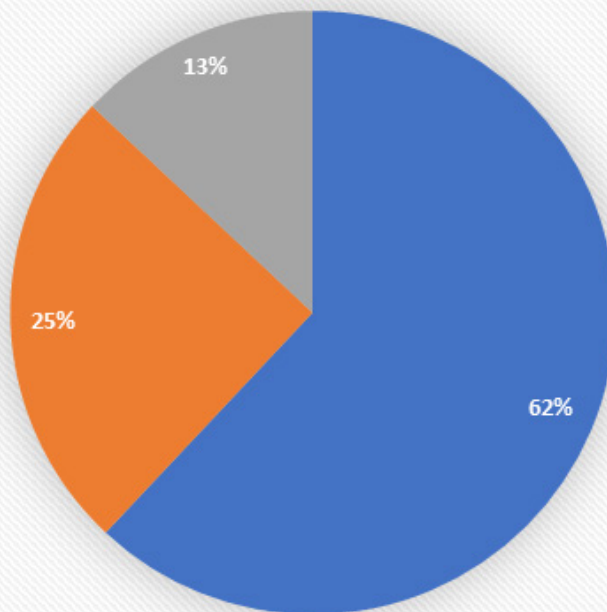
Appendix III

Tables (Powel House)

Mental Fatigue Powel_No Seating

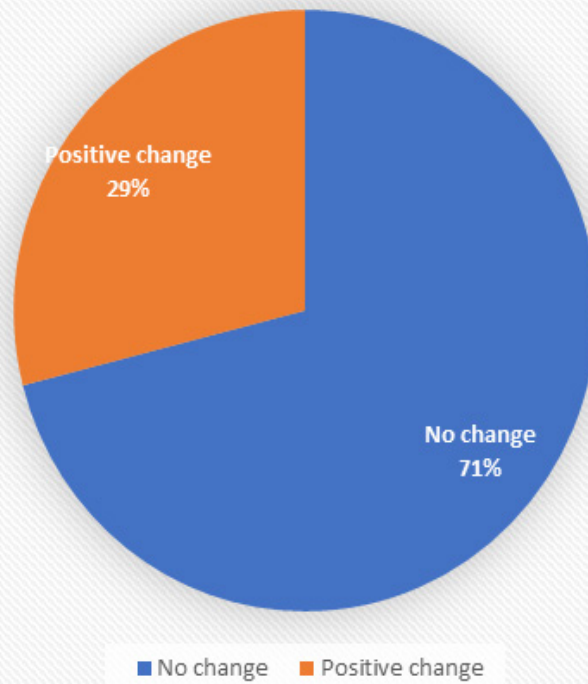


Physical Fatigue Powel_No Seating

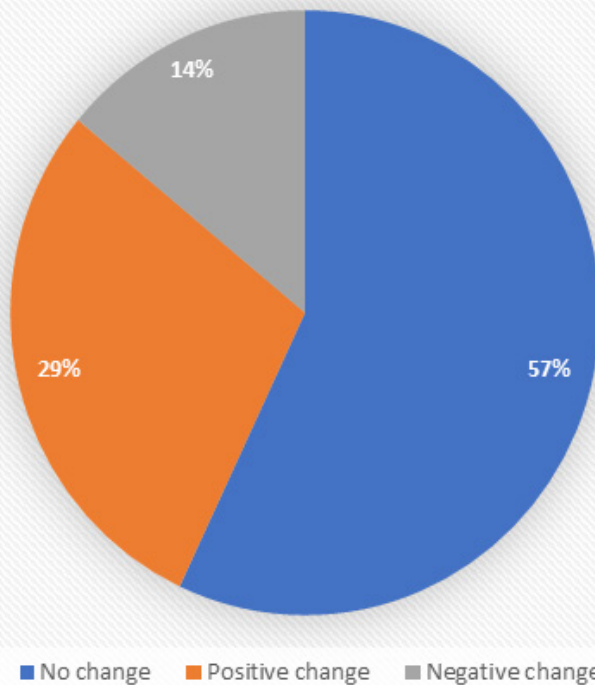


■ No change ■ Positive change ■ Negative change

Mental Fatigue Powel_Seating



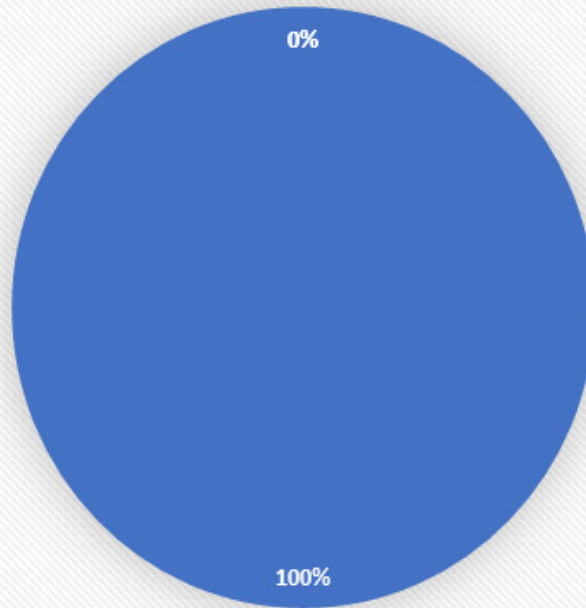
Physical Fatigue Powel_Seating



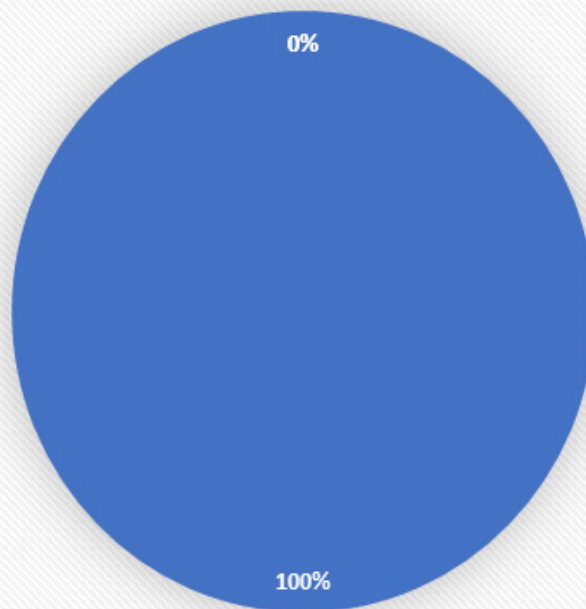
Appendix IV

Tables (Ebenezer Maxwell Mansion)

Mental Fatigue Ebenezer_No Seating

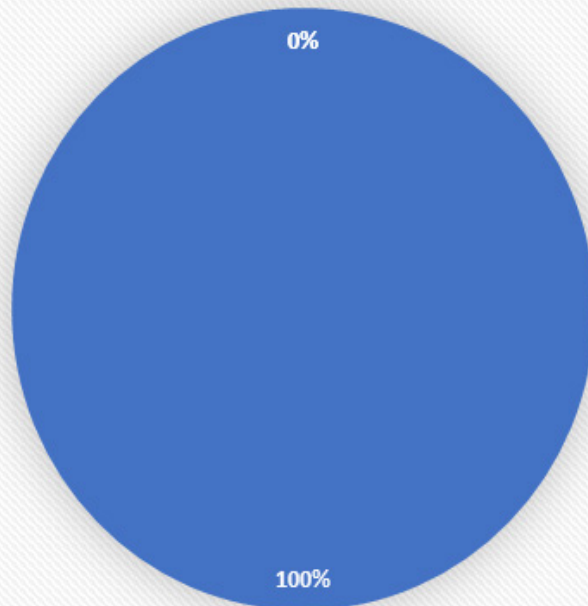


Physcial Fatigue Ebenezer_No Seating

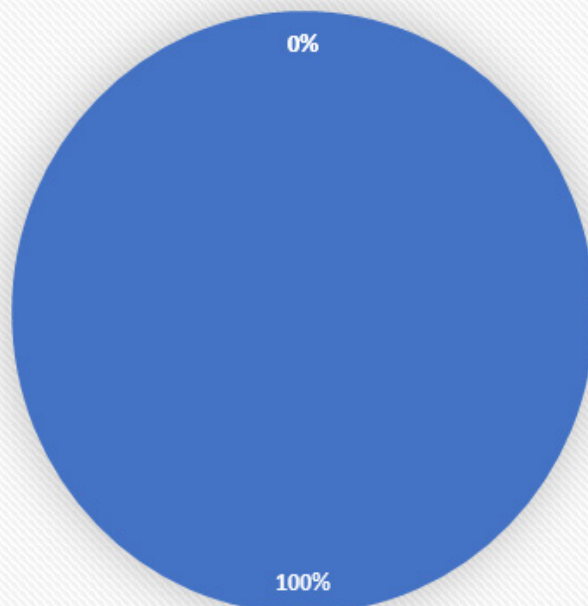


■ No change ■ Positive change ■ Negative change

Mental Fatigue Ebenezer_Seating



Physcial Fatigue Ebenezer_Seating



The physical space of the Ebenezer Maxwell Mansion is smaller so there was little space for visitors to make use of the seating as a seat. Their experience at the mansion is also around forty-five minutes so any phenomena of museum fatigue is not setting in. It is highly likely there is no change because visitors' experience was not that much different with the portable seating than without.