

# Grand Rapids Public Museum School Summer Workshop.

*Be curious.* GRAND  
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MUSEUM

2023 Summary Report.



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## 2023 Museum School Workshop was developed and presented by:

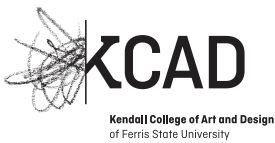
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**Grand Rapids Public Museum** (GRPM) is a community asset dedicated to the public, designed to inspire curiosity and learning in all who visit. The Museum focuses on science, history and culture, and has more than 250,000 artifacts and specimens in its Collections, used for the noblest purpose – education.



**Grand Valley State University's College of Education** (GVSU) focuses on educational principles such as place-based education, active learning, the interaction of theory and practice, and learning relevancy, offering students the type of personalized attention needed to become leaders in their fields.



**Kendall College of Art & Design of Ferris State University** (KCAD) is a college within Ferris State University, with an expertise in design and design thinking, which prepares students for leadership in the visual arts, design, art history, and art education; provides innovative, collaborative education that fosters intellectual growth and individual creativity; and promotes the ethical and civic responsibilities of artists and designers, locally and globally.



**Grand Rapids Public Schools** (GRPS) is an urban school district serving more than 14,000 students, making it the eighth-largest public school district in Michigan. The student population represents more than 70 countries, with over 75 languages spoken. There are 40 schools in this dynamic district, including the Grand Rapids Public Museum School.



**Grand Rapids Public Museum School** is an XQ Project School that leverages community-based partnerships and projects to create a one-of-a-kind learning environment. Students are pushed to take risks, guide their own learning, and solve real-world problems. Their mission is to use place-based design thinking and museum mindset to create learning experiences that develop confident, creative, and competent thinkers, doers, and leaders.



**XQ Institute** is a growing movement to reimagine what is possible for public education in America and a hub for community voices, cutting edge ideas, and expert resources to create new pathways to success for students. This passionate network of educators, students, families, and civic-minded citizens are dedicated to rethinking school in order to create new learning opportunities for young people and open up the possibilities of the wider world. The XQ Institute provided the funding to support the 2023 Museum School Summer Workshop.

## Background

In 2015, the Grand Rapids Public Museum School was one of just ten schools across the country awarded the prestigious XQ Super School Award for educational innovation. The School model for curriculum was based on its unique approach to community partnerships, including the Grand Rapids Public Museum (GRPM), Grand Valley State University (GVSU), and Kendall College of Art and Design (KCAD). The goal was to shape student learning through the synthesis of place-based education, design thinking, and museum mindset.

**Place-Based Education.** Place-based education is an educational approach that uses all aspects of the local environment, including the cultural, historical, sociopolitical, natural and built environment as a context for learning. Learning is focused on community engagement and participation in projects that directly connect to the assets and challenges of the community in which the school is embedded. It is intended to inspire not only academic learning but also awe and wonder, all of which lead to taking on the responsibilities of environmental stewardship and civic engagement.

**Design Thinking.** Design thinking is a conceptual framework through which problems are solved creatively, allowing for visionary innovation and forward progression centered on the user experience. Students build empathy while addressing the complexity of whole systems as a part of a transdisciplinary team. Students learn the value of diversity in order to be more successful in the way solutions are conceptualized. Meaningful reflection and feedback loops are integral to success.

**Museum Mindset.** Museum methodology is a multifaceted base of learning that leverages the museum's resources and location. Students use exhibits, artifacts, and museum technologies to investigate, share, collect, collaborate, and think temporally.

GVSU, KCAD and the GRPM, who will be referred to in this document as core collaborators/core partners, have worked closely with GRPS and the Grand Rapids Public Museum School staff to develop innovative curriculum.

An essential component of the school's success has been professional development to empower school staff with the tools to integrate Place-based Education, Design Thinking and Museum Mindset into their instruction and school culture. The core collaborators have developed and delivered this training for Museum School staff each summer.

The inaugural 2022 Summer Workshop at the Museum School was the team's first big opportunity to share their learnings and successes with a broader community of educators. We were encouraged by several creative projects that came directly from this workshop, including several museum-based collaborations such as when the United Jewish School visited and used artifacts and exhibits for a [lesson to reflect on Jewish identity](#). These innovative projects, in addition to very positive evaluations and feedback, motivated us to offer the second annual workshop in August 2023. This report will summarize the impact of the 2023 Museum School Summer Workshop

In 2023, the GRPM Director of Education was Project Coordinator for the workshop. They collaborated with core partners to develop education materials and activities that incorporate Museum Mindset, Place-Based Education and Design Thinking. The Project Coordinator also organized registration, participant communications, evaluations and logistics for the workshop. They were onsite each day of the workshop as the host/master of events.

## Workshop Design

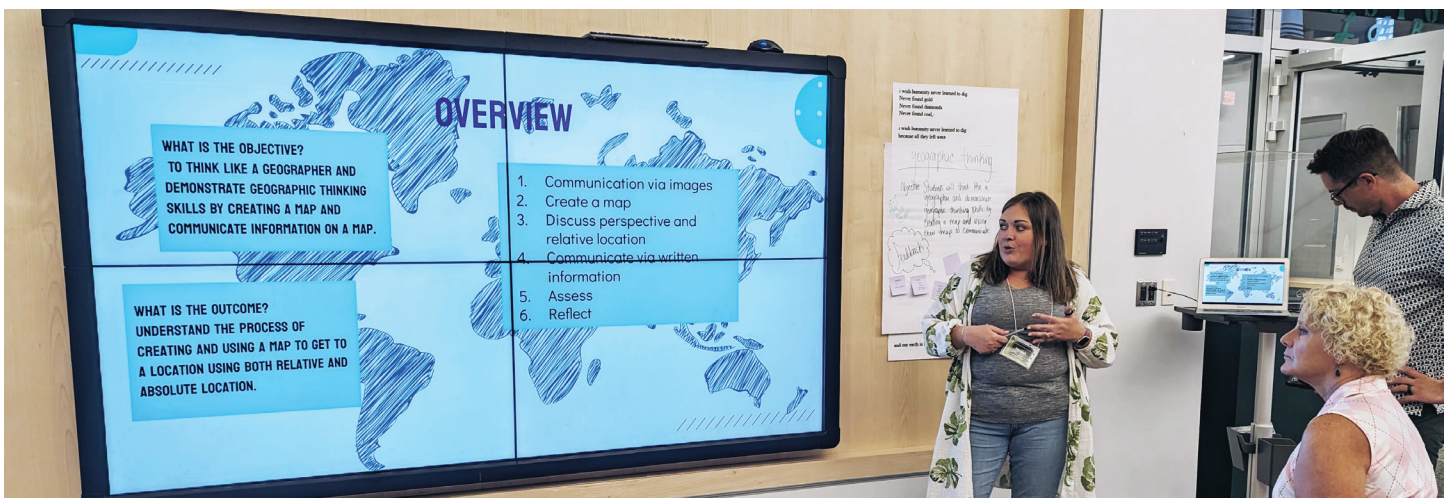
The project team worked together to develop education materials and activities that embodied the strengths of Museum Mindset, Place-Based Education and Design Thinking. The partners' expertise and materials were synthesized into a 3-day workshop that would be relevant and impactful to a cohort of educators in West Michigan. The workshop was designed to emphasize how the Museum School model blends the three approaches to learning in a way that produces deep learning and prioritizes community partnerships.

### Essential elements of the workshop design were:

- **Hands-on and experiential training.** Participants experienced a place-based walking excursion, investigated Museum artifacts and exhibits, prototyped and ideated in design thinking mini-challenges. These visceral experiences prompted teachers to see things through their students' eyes, build empathy, and to reflect on how they could incorporate these types of engaging instructional strategies into their practice.
- **An atmosphere of collaboration and support.** The workshop's deliberate variety in rhythm, speakers, discussion prompts, and flexible groupings were all designed to create a culture of collaboration and connection. We wanted to create a community of passionate educators and provide them with opportunities to discuss, share their expertise and draw inspiration from each other.
- **Ample time to workshop and develop their curriculum.** 1-2 hours each day were reserved for participants to apply new learnings to their own units. Teachers flexed between individual work time, peer collaboration and consultations with workshop facilitators. All of this culminated in a gallery walk showcase for teachers to share their prototypes and receive feedback.

The Project Coordinator met regularly with core collaborators in the development of the workshop, organizing their vision and materials into a cohesive sequence. Partners completed an anonymous survey to gauge their feedback on two main areas: the collaborative process of preparing for and presenting the workshop and their reflections on how well the workshop met our shared goals.

The trust and understanding that has been built amongst the core collaborators over the years of partnership was evident in the success of the workshop and in the collaborator feedback survey. A summary of collaborator feedback is provided on the next page.



## Core Collaborator Feedback: Survey Responses

Question	Average Score
There was mutual respect, understanding, and trust amongst project collaborators.	5.0
My expertise and vision were valued in the planning process.	5.0
The final agenda of the workshop was reflective of my expertise and vision.	5.0
The workshop covered an appropriate range of topics and addressed the goals of this collaborative team.	5.0
The combination of Place-Based Education, Design-thinking and Museum Mindset was an essential component of the workshop's success.	5.0

*Collaborators rated their experience on a Likert scale and their responses were converted to a number value. The conversion is as follows; completely disagree - 1, somewhat disagree - 2, neutral - 3, somewhat agree - 4, completely agree - 5.*



## Workshop Overview

The Grand Rapids Public Museum School and founding partners worked collaboratively to share their strategies and learnings through a 3-day workshop for middle school high school educators in August 2023. This workshop assisted participants with the tools to integrate best practices of museum mindset, place-based learning and design thinking in their own communities. Facilitators shared advice and experiences to help schools unlock the power of community partnerships.

- **Numbers**

- 34 Educators, grades 6-12
- 20 schools across:
  - 10 Public School Districts
  - 2 Private Schools
  - 2 Charter Schools
- 18 State Continuing Education Clock Hours earned by participants



## Agenda Overview

Tuesday, Aug. 8	Wednesday, Aug. 9	Thursday, Aug. 10
<p><b>Welcome Address</b> - Museum School Principal Dr. Chris Hanks</p> <p><b>Icebreakers and Introduction</b></p> <p><b>Placed Based Education (PBE) - Experiential Session</b> - Facilitated by GVSU College of Education and Museum School Teaching Staff</p> <p><b>Design Thinking (DT) - Experiential Session</b> - Facilitated by KCAD</p> <p><b>Workshop Time</b> - Participants worked on their own projects individually or in small groups.</p> <p><b>Share Out + Reflections</b></p>	<p><b>Museum Mindset - Experiential Session</b> - Facilitated by GRPM</p> <p><b>Student Project Showcase</b> - Facilitated by High School Students from the Grand Rapids Public Museum High School</p> <p><b>GRPM Archives Tour</b> - Facilitated by GRPM Curators</p> <p><b>Workshop Time</b> - Participants worked on their own projects individually or in small groups.</p> <p><b>Share Out + Reflections</b></p>	<p><b>Breakout Activity:</b> Participants chose between 4 experiential learning sessions.</p> <p><b>Workshop + Presentation Prep</b></p> <p><b>Presentations</b> – Each educator pitched their project design work in a gallery walk format. Afterwards, they had one final workshop session to incorporate ideas that sparked from the gallery walk.</p> <p><b>Panel Discussion</b> - Museum School Administration and Teaching Staff</p> <p><b>Post-program feedback and survey</b></p> <p><b>Final Share out + Reflections</b></p>

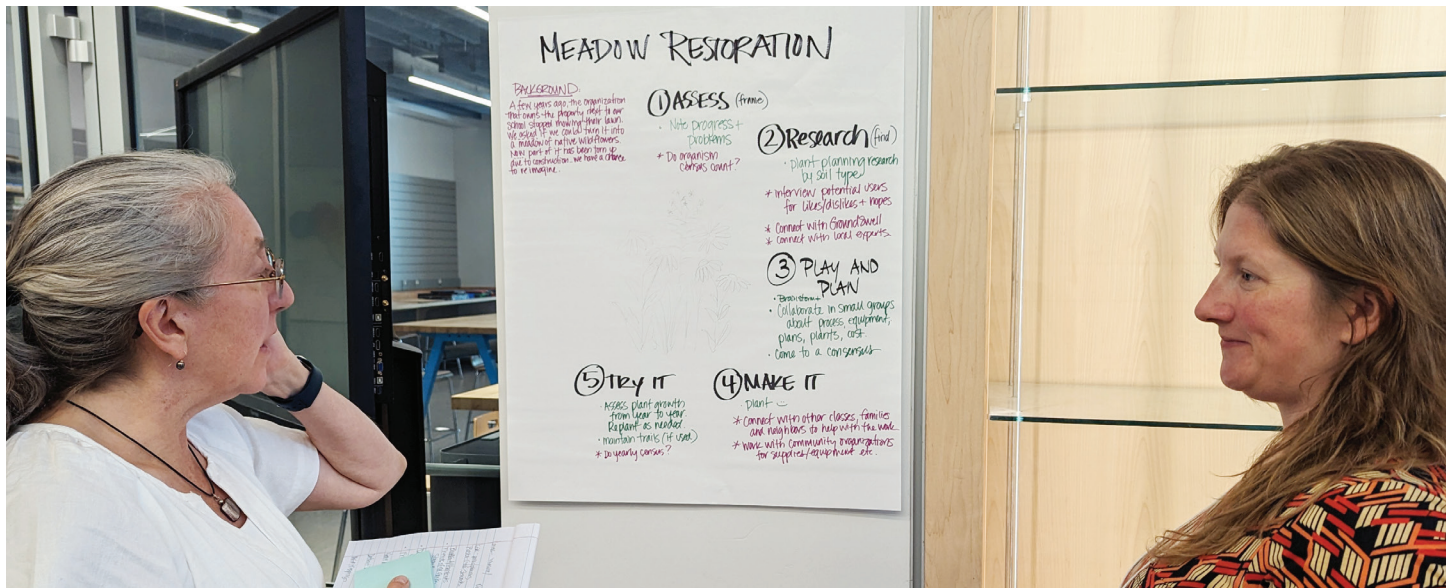
# Program Evaluations

## Teacher Surveys

Educators completed a post-program survey via google forms, containing a combination of qualitative, likert-scale survey questions and open-ended prompts for feedback. A summary of the data collected is provided below.

### Highlights of pre and post workshop survey

Question	Pre-Program Average	Post-Program Average	Percent Change
Rate your current level of comfort with place-based education. 1=Not at all Comfortable; 10=Extremely Comfortable	5.06	7.67	52% Increase
Rate your current level of comfort with design thinking. 1=Not at all Comfortable; 10=Extremely Comfortable	5.94	8.00	35% Increase
Rate your current level of comfort with working with Museum resources (exhibits, objects, etc). 1=Not at all Comfortable; 10=Extremely Comfortable	5.54	8.33	50% Increase
Rate your current level of comfort working with community partners. 1=Not at all Comfortable; 10=Extremely Comfortable	6.23	7.33	18% Increase
There is value in getting students outside of the 4 walls of the classroom. 1=Completely Disagree; 10=Completely Agree	9.74	9.80	1% Increase
I am feeling inspired going into the upcoming school year. 1=Completely Disagree; 10=Completely Agree	8.46	9.37	11% Increase
I am confident that I can provide innovative learning experiences for my students. 1=Completely Disagree; 10=Completely Agree	8.57	8.90	4% Increase



## Analysis of Qualitative responses

All responses in the open-ended feedback questions were reviewed through an informal thematic analysis. Data tables below provide a summary of the themes that were most commonly noted throughout all responses.

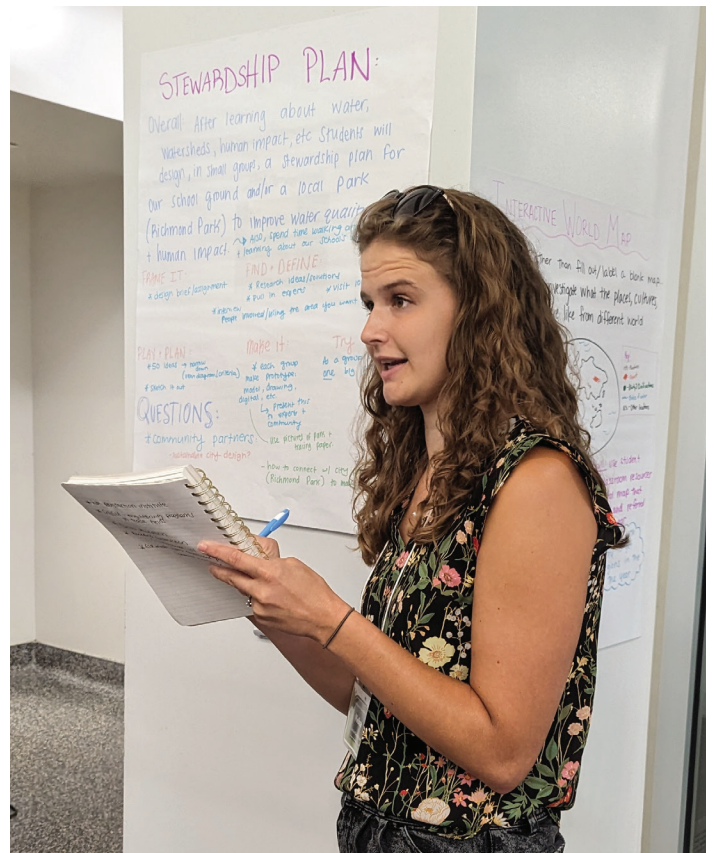
**Prompt: Please describe the most valuable things you learned or experienced during the workshop.**

Themes	Representative Comments
High-quality learning around Museum Mindset, Place-Based Education, and Design Thinking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I valued learning from a variety of people who all have a hand in teaching students in unique ways and providing unique experiences. I thought that each of the concepts were well articulated and presented, and an opportunity was given to put them into practice so that one could feel confident going out to our schools.</li> <li>• I have been to design thinking PD before, but this is the first time I've ever really understood it.</li> <li>• I loved learning about place based learning, I hope to bring more of that to my students.</li> <li>• I loved the second day with the Museum Tour and info about museum mindset. So organized and applicable. I enjoyed learning how many resources are available to use in the classroom through the museum.</li> </ul>
Collaboration and connections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I loved being able to connect with educators from other districts</li> <li>• I got a lot of great, innovative teaching ideas from presenters and fellow educators.</li> <li>• I appreciated learning ways to work with the museum and community partners to make learning more meaningful, and I made wonderful connections with other educators.</li> </ul>
Engaging and experiential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I very much enjoyed the place based learning and actually experiencing what it would be like to be a student.</li> <li>• I enjoyed the hands-on learning and LOVED the opportunities to get up and move and explore different things.</li> <li>• This proves that professional developments can be engaging and fun while still providing crucial info.</li> </ul>
Time to design, work, and apply their learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I appreciated the time to design and use what we have been learning about.</li> <li>• I valued workshop time with the museum staff and experts. Sharing ideas and getting feedback was wonderful!</li> <li>• I really enjoyed working on my idea and presenting it to others at the end of the workshop.</li> </ul>



## Constructive Feedback: Ideas to consider for future workshops and opportunities.

Themes	Representative Comments
<p>More time to learn from and collaborate with other participants.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It would be great to add some time that similar departments could provide feedback with each other.</li> <li>• Having quick breakout times (pair and shares) with other workshop teachers...I always enjoy making teacher connections</li> <li>• I'd like to hear from other workshop participants more about what they are already doing in their schools in relation to place-based education and design thinking. We can all learn from each other!</li> </ul>
<p>Difficulty understanding how Museum School approach can work in their school setting.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is still hard for me to conceptualize how a lot of these ideas will work in my school setting. That is no fault of the training though and more related to the rigidity of many public schools</li> <li>• I heard a lot of fellow participants express the concern that they would not have the time or freedom to implement the ideas. I think providing discussion time that specifically addresses those issues for those who teach in traditional schools would be critical for helping what you have taught to take root.</li> </ul>
<p>Timing and pacing of the schedule.</p>	<p><i>Respondents had conflicting feedback on the length of the workshop and various components. Some wanted more workshop time, and some wanted less. Some wanted a full week workshop while some commented that it could be shortened each day.</i></p>



## Testimonials

These teacher comments speak to the value of this professional learning and the impactful, engaging experiences we were hoping to provide. Participants were pleasantly surprised with this opportunity because it felt more valuable to them than many of the professional learning experiences they have previously participated in.

*"I have had the best first weeks at school that I have had in my teaching career, and I have to give credit to the museum training you hosted over the summer. I have had so much more enthusiasm and been able to create some awesome lessons and activities using what I learned from the training. Thank you so much for offering that to educators and for all the work you and your team put into it. I have been recommending it to so much of my staff, I gained so much from attending."*

*"More effective than the last ten years of teaching PD I've experienced through my district. You have very seriously and intentionally thought of everything that I have ever struggled with in other professional developments. This was engaging and meaningful."*

*"Absolutely LOVED this opportunity. I have been teaching for 27 years and this ranks very high up in my PD experiences. Thank you for facilitating such an excellent and meaningful experience, I am looking forward to integrating everything I've learned into my curriculum."*

*"Just a huge thank you. This is what education needs and I truly hope the outreach you're doing catches on in a BIG way because.... THIS IS AMAZING! Thank thank thank you!"*

