

## In the Classroom 88

# How to Use Gallery Walks in the Classroom

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**Stan Skrabut:** Well, thanks everyone so much for taking time to listen to this podcast. It certainly means a lot. I know you can be doing other things, perhaps you are, but you're still hanging out with me, and I really do appreciate it. This week, we're going to take a closer look at gallery walks. A gallery walk is a strategy for looking at and critiquing exhibits. Let's see how we can use this in our classroom.

I first tripped upon gallery walks, not necessarily as a classroom solution, but I was at a conference at Social Media Marketing World. I attended a session given by Duncan Wardle. His presentation was how to innovate by thinking differently the Disney way. He is a Disney ambassador. Disney basically, teaches other folks how to use Disney strategies to make their work better. One of the strategies that he shared was this idea of a gallery walk. He was promoting this strategy as a way to improve creativity and innovation.

The reason that he uses this strategy is, he noted that we tend to become confrontational when we're across the table from each other. This is more in a business setting, and where you have board tables, and people are looking at each other across, but the idea of a gallery walk is everybody gets out of their chair and goes and looks at an exhibit where the presentation is on the wall. They go in and look at it, and review it. They tend to think more expansively. Primarily, because they're all facing the same way. They're facing the same direction and they're not in that confrontational mode. I thought this was a great idea and I figured, "Well, we'll just weave this into what we're doing in education." I come to find out some other folks who've already done this, and I'm late to the party.

I learned this idea in an entirely different route, and I'm still going to take some credit for it. I wanted to learn more about this strategy because I really had not seen it used in the classrooms I was working with. The large part is I'm not necessarily invited into classrooms, so maybe it's already being used, but we can still talk about it. Primarily, I've seen it in museums. This idea of a museum is a great way to describe what this concept is. You imagine a museum, it's a large space, and there's exhibits everywhere. They're on the wall, they are out in the middle of the floor, and individuals or groups of individuals move from exhibit to exhibit to examine them, and reflect on them, and provide critique on them. Well, why can't we do that in the classroom?

We can create these exhibits. Either the instructor creates them, or the students create these exhibits. The instructor would place these exhibits around the room with ample space that could accommodate a group. These groups would go from exhibit to exhibit to look at the exhibit, reflect upon it, and the instructor may include

questions that would spark discussion and reflection, or maybe they just have a question that is there, and students have to reflect and discuss the question.

Now, in the classroom exhibits, at least, what I've come to understand is, there are some way to capture the students' discussion. They have either an easel they can write on, a piece of paper they can write on, or they can collect it in a digital document. They rotate through each exhibit to discuss the exhibit. Then at the end, they have time to collect their thoughts and report out to the rest of the class what they have learned.

Lots of reasons why we would want to use gallery walks. A lot of what I'm sharing with you I have attached links, in the show notes, to those different articles where I've been pulling this information, pulling it together, curating it for you. I would encourage you to go check those out if you want to know more about gallery walk, but why use gallery walk? Well, this provides time for students to practice discussing, debating, organizing, and writing around the language of a topic rather than just hear it from one person, rather than just hear it from the instructor.

It also provides higher order thinking skills. If you think about Bloom's taxonomy, this taps into analysis, evaluation, synthesis, and it allows students to reflect and pull that information together. It gives students an opportunity to think about alternative approaches to a problem that there should not be just one way, the teacher's way of solving a problem, but students can come up with alternative solutions based on their perspective.

It allows students to share their voices, and their ideas, and their experiences. Which as you know, I'm a fan of andragogy and definitely want to be tapping into that. Because they're working with peers, it's more non-threatening than if they are doing it in front of the instructor. Naturally, it's a great way to gauge prior knowledge, and skills, and also identify gaps that students may have. It gets them out of their chair. Movement is always good.

How do you conduct a gallery walk? Well, the Science Education or the Science Education Resource Center at Carleton college has put together a wonderful set of step-by-step instruction. I'm including those in the show notes, but I'm going to walk you through those steps because this seems to be general consensus on how it's done. They've just been the best ones to capture this.

The first thing is to generate question. As an instructor, generate four to five questions. It really, depending on the size of your class, if you have a bigger class, it's all based on the number of students in each group, but really for your class, how much time you want to give them per question, four to five questions should do it. Make sure that you write these questions down. You can post them on an easel next to the exhibit, or that could be the exhibit. You post those questions. You can tape up some paper with that question. Lots of different ways, but you're going to make sure that you have your questions written out. Make sure that you post them around the room where you have enough space between groups.

Prior to having the students work on this, you're going to provide instructions on how to do it. How to go about what is acceptable behavior as far as answering questions? You're going to do that.

Then you're going to group your students and assign roles. Each group has a different color marker. Ask the members of the group to introduce themselves to each other, and then send them on their way. Typically, you'll have somebody leading the discussion, somebody that's the scribe, that's writing things down, you'll do that.

From there, they start their gallery walk. Each team goes to a separate exhibit. That will be their originating exhibit. That's because that'll be important at the end of the activity, but that's their originating activity. They should make note of that on documents that they have and what question that they are referring to, or what exhibit that they're looking at.

From there is, they will look at the exhibit, discuss it, reflect on it, write down comments, or answers regarding the questions, or whatever feedback they need to provide on the paper that's provided at each exhibit.

After a specific time, probably five minutes time, then students will rotate to the next exhibit. It's important for an instructor to announce that it's time to rotate, and then they rotate clockwise to the next station. As far as the instructor, just mill around and monitor progress, making sure that folks are involved, making sure that students are answering the questions. They're not stuck on anything.

As the class progresses, they'll continue to rotate, and eventually, they'll get to their starting point. Their starting point, that group of students will basically summarize the comments that are pulled together that all the other students left. As they rotated maybe six rotations, eventually, they need to summarize and report out what they've discovered. You have to leave time for students to be able to do that.

As an instructor, you're just gauging understanding, making sure that they're on task and on target with-- Especially if it's knowledge material, if you happen to be doing just a critique of different pieces of works that may go a little differently, but you want to make sure that if it's knowledge content, that you want to make sure that they're on task.

When, and how, or when, what opportunities do you have for doing a gallery walk? One of the very basic ones is an art critique or peer review. A student creates a work product. It could be a piece of art, it could be an essay, it could be a presentation, it could be a lot of different things. They've created this. What you can do is have the other students offer suggestions, how to improve upon the product, or just a general critique of the finished product. It could be a work in progress, and offering suggestions on where to go, or it could be a finished product, and just providing critique. As part of this exercise, the students themselves who own that exhibit, would generate a question that they want their fellow students to answer. It could be just giving feedback, or it could be deduce the meaning

**Speaker 1:** that they provided, different things.

Another gallery walk could be the introduction of new technologies. As an instructor, you created short videos on different technologies, say you want students to come to know about, and then they go maybe from computer station to computer station to watch that video and offer feedback. You may want students to create poster sessions or infographics that other students, or are going to gain knowledge from, and offer critique about. This could be about case studies, the short case studies that you have, students read the case study real quick, answer questions related to that case study.

It could be micro learning where you provide a short tutorial, and then students identify what the key takeaway is from that particular micro learning.

Other things that you may look at publish poems, selected text, images, thought-provoking statements, hot button items, current events, that students may provide a summary of what's happening, and other students come by, learn about it, and offer commentary. Those are some different ways that you could use a gallery walk.

If you want to, you could also assess gallery walk. Now, I didn't go into a lot of detail because I think this is just a knowledge-acquiring activity, but you could also use assessments for assessing their groupwork, their oral presentations they do as part of the report out, a group discussion that they have, or any written work. I provided links that would also have links to rubrics is a way to doing that.

Well, with the world of COVID upon us, we also have to think how to do this in a digital manner. That if we're working afar, we're using tools like Zoom. We also have collaborative technologies available to us. Lots of different ways that you could do this. I'm a fan of the collaborative technologies. I think Google applications provide some wonderful tools to do these digital gallery walk that students can access the same document, add content, multiple students can do this. Some of the other tools, along with the Google tools, that I think would be very useful for these digital gallery walks, you have certainly Google Slides. You can use the notes feature in Google Slides to capture bullets about what students are seeing. Google Docs, you can turn on commenting, those are great tools. Jamboard is a new tool that I have come about. I think it's just a wonderful tool. Some old standards like VoiceThread, Flipgrid, Padlet, those are other tools that you can use to get this collaborative feeling.

Basically, students could create an exhibit, you pull them in together into one document, and then have students go in and add their reflections. You could do this maybe in a discussion board. That's another way to do it, or use Google Forms to collect their input, or as I mentioned, those other tools, those are other ways that you can collect input.

Other ways that I think is really useful for doing a digital gallery walk is to use a meeting platform, a virtual meeting platform like Zoom, where you can have your students go into breakout sessions, and have that collaborative gallery in front of them, where they can look at it, they can have written comments, they can

participate in that, but also have that discussion among themselves. One of the tools in Zoom, when you have students in a breakout session is, you can have a broadcast message that you type in, where you tell all the students to switch to the next slide. Basically telling them to rotate. Those are ways that you could do that.

You could also use a course wiki, putting a wiki page together as part of your gallery walk. Students could be responsible as groups to build their exhibit, and then they would, as a group, go review the other exhibits, and add commentary to it. Just another way of doing that.

As far as tips for success, use open-ended questions. Something very simple as yes or no, that's not necessarily a good question. You want to have students respond to it based on their different perspective. Encourage students when they are doing critiques of work to use a strategy like Pixar's Plussing. The company Pixar, they use this strategy they picked up from Disney, and it's called plussing. When you're looking at something and saying yes and, basically, you're focusing more on building the product up rather than tear it down. Absolutely essential that you control for the time for reviewing and responding to each exhibit. That you want to make sure that you're on track, you get through all the exhibits, you can have time for your outbrief. You want to make sure that you do that.

It's also important to explain why you're doing this particular activity, and provide guidance as far as responding to comments that you want. You don't want just fluff, you want substantial comments so students can continue to grow, especially during a critique.

Well, that is a little bit about a gallery walk. I think it's a great way to get up out of the chairs, go see some new things and reflect on them, and learn more about them. I like what Duncan Wardle said at the beginning that because everybody's facing the same direction, you eliminate some of that confrontational aspects to it that if you were to do this in a meeting, or even in a classroom, that the focus is on positive building up this Pixar's Plussing. Anyways, before I let you go, here is a quick plug for my book.