



Voyage to Vietnam Remedial/Summative Report

Children's Discovery Museum of San Jose
Fall 2015



Table of Contents

Overview	3
Theoretical Approach & Methods	5
Results	9
Satisfaction & Enjoyment	10
Engagement	13
Cultural Understanding	20
Perceived Value of Cultural Exhibitions	31
Conclusions	32
References	34
Appendices	36

Overview

The Children's Discovery Museum of San Jose (CDM) contracted Garibay Group to conduct an evaluation of the *Voyage to Vietnam: Celebrating the Tết Festival* exhibition. The evaluation focused on remediation but also served as a summative study. This report discusses summative findings.

Voyage to Vietnam: Celebrating the Tết Festival was designed to help children ages 3–10 and their families engage with the traditions of Tết and learn more about Vietnam in general through fun, exciting experiences and immersive environments. Voyage to Vietnam is part of the Freeman Foundation Asian Culture Exhibit Series.

The overall exhibition consisted of 13 key areas/components. The exhibition's goal was to provide American children an opportunity to gain understanding, appreciation, and respect for the customs, traditions, rituals, values, and daily experiences of people who live in Vietnam, discovering similarities and differences between their lives and the lives of children in Vietnam.

Garibay Group provided an interim preliminary evaluation report for the CDM team. The remediation report focused on identifying strengths and challenges of the exhibition with recommendations for remediation (see Appendix A for a summary table describing recommendations for remediation).

The summative aspects of the evaluation focused on assessing outcomes, more specifically the overall nature and quality of the visitor experience—particularly how and to what extent the exhibition helped build visitors' understanding of Vietnam and Vietnamese culture; identifying ways the exhibition helped children discover similarities and differences between their lives in the U.S. and the lives of children in Vietnam; and identifying both successful and less successful aspects of the exhibition.

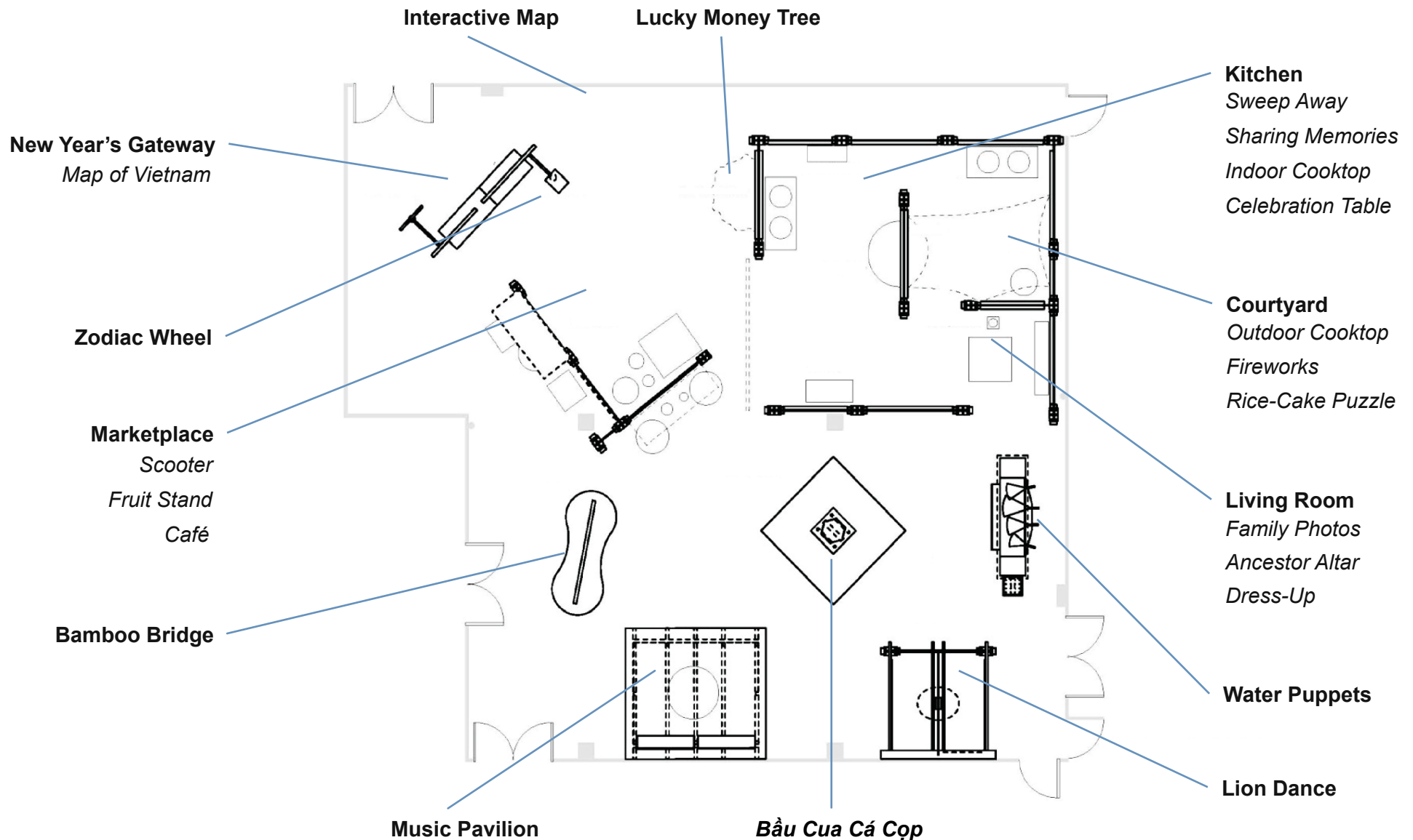
Evaluation Focus

- Assess the overall nature and quality of the visitor experience in the exhibition, particularly how and extent to which the exhibition encouraged families to play and learn together.
- Assess how and to what extent the exhibition helped build visitors' understanding and appreciation of Vietnam and Vietnamese customs, traditions, rituals, and values.
- Identify how and to what extent the exhibition helped families discover and think about similarities and differences between their lives and the lives of children in Vietnam.
- Identify aspects of the exhibition that worked well and those that were less successful in order to inform potential remediation.

(See Appendix B for the complete list of guiding questions.)

Overview, cont'd.

The *Voyage to Vietnam* exhibition had 13 key areas/components. See Appendix C for a description of each area and component.



Theoretical Approach & Methods

In this section, we discuss key theoretical frames about culture and cultural awareness that grounded the evaluation design, the analysis of visitors' interactions and experiences, and outcomes assessment.

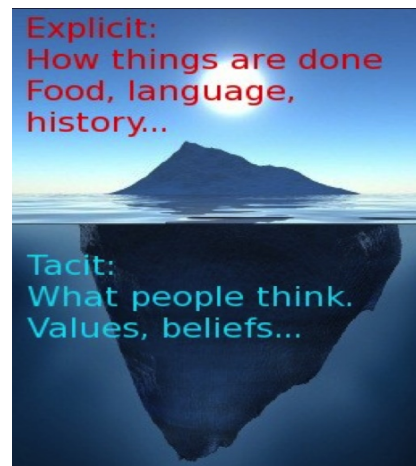
This study used a culturally responsive/contextually relevant evaluation approach (Frierson, Hood, and Hughes, 2002). In culturally responsive evaluation, the evaluator considers culture and context as critical factors that inform evaluation design (e.g., methods, analysis) and allow one to examine outcomes.

Given *Voyage to Vietnam's* exhibition goals, it was important to ground the study through an appropriate theoretical framework. Culture is complex and dynamic and has many dimensions.

It is important to outline the process by which one gains understanding, appreciation, and respect for another culture. Goode (2006) suggests that cultural understanding and appreciation entail being "cognizant, observant, and conscious of similarities and differences among and between cultural groups." This understanding also requires cultural self-awareness—the ability to be cognizant and self-reflective about how one's own values, beliefs, and judgments are influenced by one's culture (Winkelman, 2005).

Second, it is useful to recognize that culture is complex; some aspects of culture are more readily visible and accessible (e.g., food) and other aspects that are less readily apparent (e.g., beliefs). (See sidebar for more details.)

Thus, developing cultural understanding is a non-linear, complex, dynamic process that occurs over time (Burchum, 2002). This implies that generalized knowledge hierarchies typically developed for museum experiences are limited because they tend to outline a linear process. A more appropriate and culturally responsive frame for assessing an exhibition's outcomes is to examine how the exhibition contributes to and fosters visitors' ongoing journeys in developing cultural understanding and appreciation. For example, what happens in families' experiences that supports them in exploring, talking about, and reflecting on their own (and Vietnamese) culture?



In the iceberg model, the explicit aspects of a culture are readily apparent to people not part of the culture. The tacit aspects can be difficult for those outside the culture to perceive.

Culture and the Iceberg Model

Culture is a complex concept difficult to succinctly define, but encompasses symbols, stories, rituals, tools, shared values, and norms (Heath, 2007). Individuals are socialized into their own culture, which influences how they understand and interpret the world and embeds them within a specific cultural context; this can make it difficult to understand cultural practices they perceive to differ from their own.

The most visible aspects of the culture to others are material culture—physical objects, food, language, clothing, architecture, and the spaces that people use. The deeper dimensions of culture, including values, beliefs, and norms, are not readily visible to outsiders.

The cultural iceberg model (Hall, 1976) is widely used to illustrate this concept. One often thinks of culture as the observable characteristics of a group, but in reality, material culture—while significant—is only part of a more complex concept.

Theoretical Approach & Methods, cont'd.

Drawing on these theoretical constructs, this study assessed the overall exhibition outcome using the following framework:

- **Engagement:** We examined what visitors did in the exhibition that exposed them to, or allowed them to physically or intellectually engage with, Vietnamese culture. We focused especially on evaluating how much families engaged physically with material culture and engaged in role playing and imaginative play that supported their gaining a sense of Vietnam and Vietnamese culture.
- **Culture Talk:** During observations, we looked for the ways families interacted and discussed their experiences in the exhibition to examine the cultural content of conversations. We also looked at the extent to which conversations included evidence of families discovering similarities and differences between their lives and the lives of children in Vietnam. Given the ages of children in the groups, “culture talk” in the case of *Voyage to Vietnam* does not mean long, extended conversations, but rather short snippets of conversation or chats.

We focused on capturing and examining conversations in visitors groups as they engaged in the exhibit. This was done to examine the extent to which discussions centered on cultural content, either explicit (e.g., objects, dress, food) or tacit (e.g., values, beliefs). We also analyzed whether conversations included some evidence of cultural self-awareness.

- **Reflection & Synthesis:** Finally, we examined whether families articulated ways that the exhibition deepened their understanding or appreciation of Vietnamese culture. We listened to them talk about their subjective experience in the exhibition and how they wove the experience into their understanding of Vietnam and Vietnamese culture. We also looked for whether visitors reported increased interest in experiencing or learning about Vietnam and Vietnamese culture.

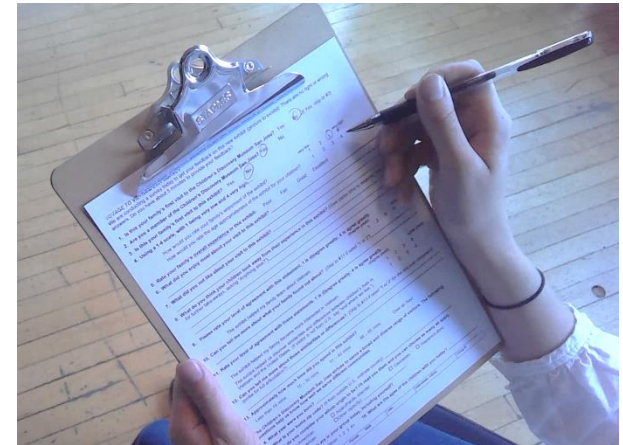
Methods

The summative evaluation of *Voyage to Vietnam* used a mixed-methods approach involving both qualitative and quantitative methods (Greene & Caracelli, 2003). Methods used included exit surveys, observations, intercept interviews, and depth interviews.

Exit Surveys

The evaluation team used exit surveys to gather feedback from visitors on aspects of the exhibition including satisfaction, enjoyment, and how much the exhibition helped families learn about and become more aware of and interested in Vietnam.

As families left the exhibition, researchers intercepted them and asked them to complete a verbally-administered survey. We collected 115 surveys in April and May 2015. The exit surveys had a response rate of 54%. (See Appendix D for a profile of exit survey respondents.)



A researcher administers an exit survey. Exit surveys included both close-ended and open-ended questions and were conducted in English and Spanish.

Theoretical Approach & Methods, cont'd.

Observations with Intercept or Depth Interviews

Observations and interviews were undertaken to help us understand how families engaged with *Voyage to Vietnam*, the nature of their experience in the exhibition, and what succeeded and what did not in the exhibition. Researchers approached families as they entered the exhibition, invited them to participate in the study, and—if they consented—followed the family throughout their visit to *Voyage to Vietnam*. Using a systematic method, researchers observed the families and recorded details of their behaviors, interactions, modes of engagement, and conversations.

Following the observation, researchers conducted either a short structured intercept interview or a longer depth interview with the family. These interviews were intended to deepen our understanding of visitors' experiences as well as to provide additional data about respondents' enjoyment and satisfaction with the exhibition; how they reflected on their experiences in the exhibition; and how the experience contributed to families' understanding of, appreciation of, and interest in Vietnam. These interviews also gathered caregivers' feedback regarding the value of cultural exhibitions for their families.

In April and May 2015, observation and interview data was gathered on 40 groups (127 individuals) representing the exhibition's target audience. Researchers conducted 39 observations, 38 of which were followed by an interview. Researchers conducted 23 intercept interviews and 15 depth interviews. (One intercept interview was conducted with a family that was not observed.) Interviews were conducted in both Spanish and English. See Appendix E for profiles of observation and interview respondents.

Sampling Strategy

Researchers conducting exit surveys used random sampling to select respondents (Babbie, 1998); purposive sampling was used to select respondents for the observations and interviews (Babbie, 1998). In purposive sampling, each respondent is selected based on characteristics identified as most useful or appropriate for the study. In this evaluation, our goal was to elicit the widest range of responses by obtaining as diverse a range of participants as possible. The main criterion for group selection in this case was a range of ages.



A researcher observes a family using the indoor cooktop interactive in the kitchen. Researchers wrote detailed notes describing families' experiences in the exhibition during observations.

Theoretical Approach & Methods, cont'd.

Data Analysis

Basic descriptive statistics, used to analyze quantitative components of the data, are summarized in tables and histograms. Exit survey data is presented in percentages (some percentages do not add to 100% due to rounding). Where appropriate, the actual number of responses (N) is provided.

Researchers coded qualitative data from surveys, interviews, and observations to identify emergent patterns and themes in the data without the limitations imposed by predetermined categories (Strauss and Corbin, 1990; Patton, 1990). As patterns and themes were identified, researchers teased out the strength of these patterns and themes (Miles and Huberman, 1994).

Limitations

Because this evaluation was a remedial/summative, data collection was conducted while the exhibition was in remediation. As a result, some components did not work as well as they might have had remediation been complete.

This study is also limited by its geographical context. According to the 2010 U.S. Census, San Jose, California has the most Vietnamese Americans of any city in the U.S. (100,486, or 10.6% of the population). Therefore, results of this study only apply in this context. Outcomes for this exhibition at other museums with different local populations may look very different.



A respondent uses a sticker to indicate one of her favorite areas in *Voyage to Vietnam*. This projective technique is used during depth interviews to draw out responses in ways not always possible through simple, direct questioning.

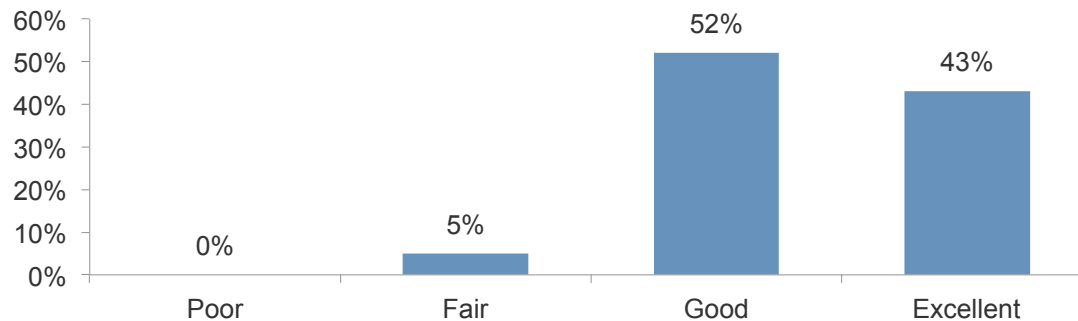
Results



Satisfaction & Enjoyment

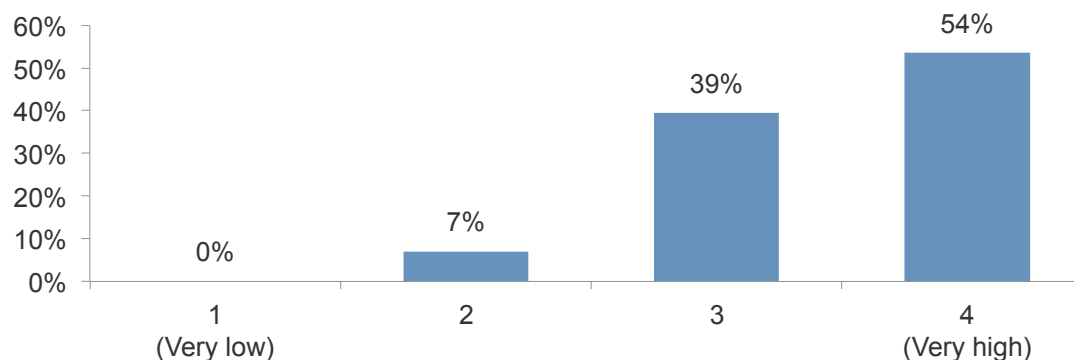
Families reported they were highly satisfied with and enjoyed their experiences in *Voyage to Vietnam*. In exit surveys, 95% of respondents rated their family's overall experience in the exhibition as "excellent" or "good." When asked to rate their family's enjoyment of the exhibition on a 1–4 scale, with 1 being "very low" and 4 being "very high," 93% of respondents rated their enjoyment a "3" or "4."

Rate your family's overall experience in the exhibit:



Source: Exit Survey; N = 115

How would you rate your family's enjoyment of the exhibit?



Source: Exit Survey; N = 114

What did you enjoy most about your visit to this exhibit?

My kids liked the dragon [Lion Dance] because they were able to imitate what they were watching on the video.

I liked the block game [Bầu Cua Cá Cọp] because they could play with each other, I could play with them, and they played with other children. I liked that they could be physically engaged doing something together, and that the game is accessible to children and adults.

That adults could participate and children could too! Liked the Vespa and the balance beam [Bamboo Bridge]. The dragon [Lion Dance] too!

The interactive stuff. Things were at her level; [I liked] the variety within the exhibit.

The cultural enrichment that it provides for children; kids get to learn about another culture in a way that is fun and interactive.

I like that it introduced children to a different culture. There's a lot of hands-on stuff that kids can do and touch. It's creative, so it catches and retains kids attention and engagement; it keeps them busy and I like that.

Very interactive and related to the particular culture and aspects of it. How you cook and clean and the games you play.

Satisfaction & Enjoyment, cont'd.

When asked what they enjoyed most about their visit to *Voyage to Vietnam*, respondents most often mentioned specific areas of the exhibition. The areas/components most frequently mentioned were the Lion Dance, the Music Pavilion, the Scooter, and the Marketplace (specifically the Vietnamese fruit). These areas/components had the most interactive elements, but they were also places where a group (including adults) could play. For instance, at the Lion Dance, children and adults of all heights could get inside the costume and enact the dance as seen in the video.

Respondents also liked the wide variety of exhibition activities that were age-appropriate for their children. Another enjoyable aspect was its cultural focus, which made the exhibition not only fun for their children but also informed and interested them.

When asked “What did you *not* like about your visit to this exhibit?”, the majority of respondents (59%) said “nothing” or that everything was good. Of those that mentioned something, most talked about a specific part of the exhibition and offered suggestions for improvement. These included adding more traditional Vietnamese food and dishes to the Café and controlling for the crowds that gathered around the Lion Dance and Scooter.

Some comments indicated issues with age appropriateness. A few respondents said that there was too much text in the exhibition at too high of a reading level for their child, while another thought the Interactive Map was too complicated for children. Although children under age 3 were not in the exhibition’s target age range, a few respondents said there were not enough activities for infants and toddlers.

Satisfaction & Enjoyment, cont'd.

Age Appropriateness

Despite a few comments about age appropriateness from caregivers of toddlers and infants, nearly all caregivers (88%) considered the exhibition age-appropriate for their children. On a 1–4 scale (1 “very low” and 4 “very high”), 49% of respondents rated the age appropriateness a “4” and 39% rated it a “3.” Only 12% rated the age appropriateness of the exhibition a “2” (11%) or a “1” (1%).

While some parents of younger children said that the information/cultural aspect of the exhibition was too advanced for their toddlers, most also said that exposure to another culture—even at an early age—was beneficial to their children and their children’s future cultural understanding.



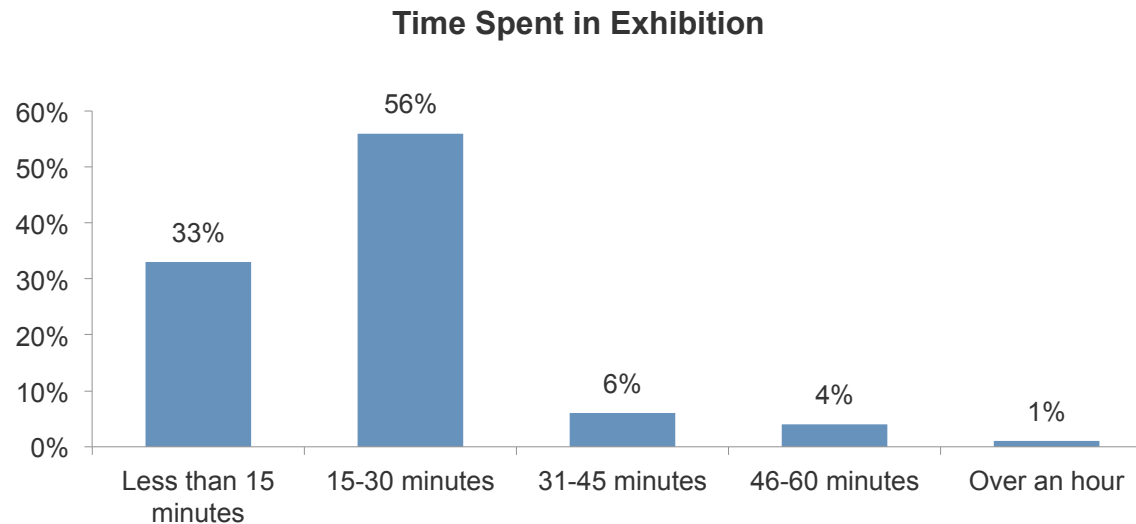
Three children ranging in age from toddler to pre-teen interact with the Lion Dance. Based on observations, the exhibition effectively engaged family groups with wide age ranges. Areas cited as especially appropriate for mixed ages of children were Fireworks, Kitchen, and Lion Dance.



A young girl looks at the Interactive Map. This component was specifically cited by caregivers as more appropriate for older children (9+ years) because of the amount of reading it required.

Engagement

More than two-thirds of exit survey respondents (67%) reported their family spent 15 minutes or more in *Voyage to Vietnam*. The majority (56%) reported spending 15–30 minutes in the exhibition.



Source: Exit Survey; N = 112



A family explores the instruments in the Music Pavilion. Nearly all observed families visited this area of the exhibition.

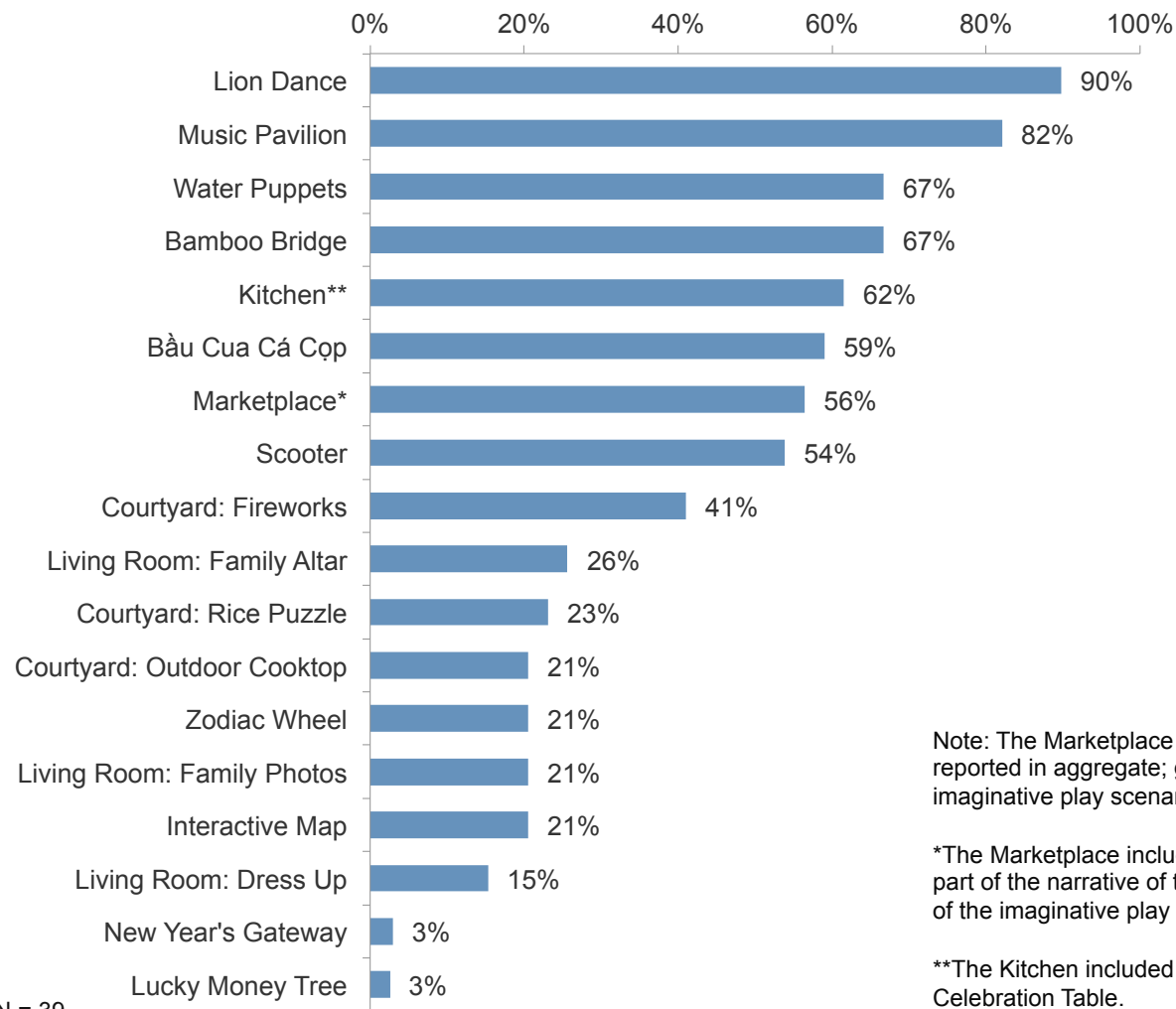


A man reads the Lucky Money Tree label while his son touches the tree. The Lucky Money Tree was one of the least visited areas of the exhibition.

Engagement, cont'd.

The areas/components that attracted the most groups were the Lion Dance, Music Pavilion, Water Puppets, Bamboo Bridge, and Kitchen, with more than 60% of the observed groups stopping at them.

Attraction Power of Area/Component
(% of Groups Who Stopped at Area/Component)



Conversely, the New Year's Gateway and Lucky Money Tree attracted very few of the visitor groups observed.

Note: The Marketplace and the Kitchen contained multiple interactives but are reported in aggregate; groups fluidly used all sections of these areas as part of imaginative play scenarios.

*The Marketplace included the Café and the Fruit Stand. (Although the Scooter was part of the narrative of the Marketplace, it was always used separately and not a part of the imaginative play scenarios in the Marketplace.)

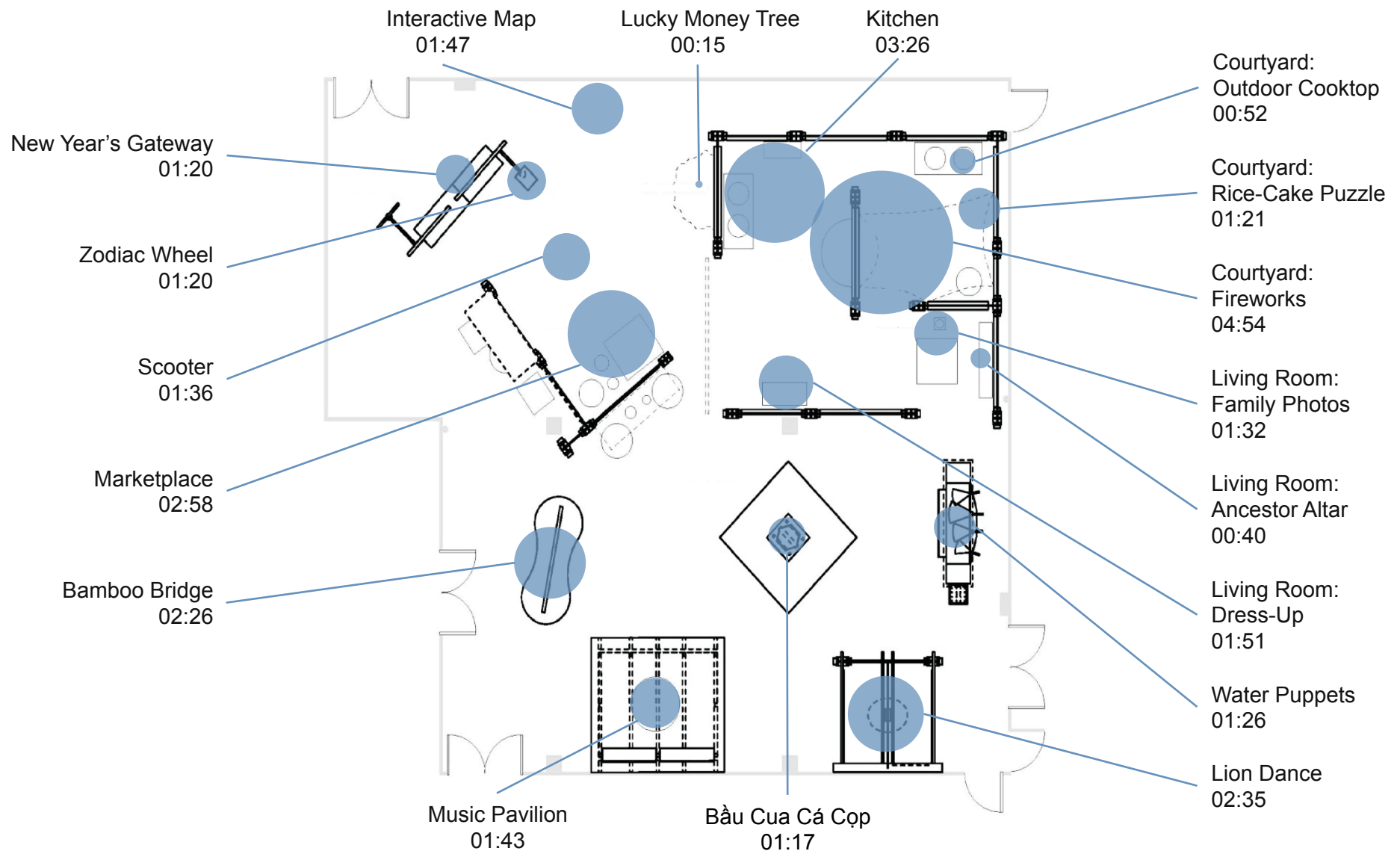
**The Kitchen included the Indoor Cooktop, Sweep Away, Sharing Memories, and Celebration Table.

N = 39

Engagement, cont'd.

This graphic shows average stay times by component. The larger the blue circle, the longer the stay time.

Holding Power of Area/Component
(Average Stay Time in MM:SS)



Engagement, cont'd.

We observed and documented child–child and child–adult interactions in *Voyage to Vietnam*; interactions between children and adults were more common.

Areas where children were most often observed interacting together were Fireworks, Lion Dance, Scooter, and Bàu Cua Cá Cọp. Areas where children and adults interacted most often were the Scooter, the Interactive Map, and the Bamboo Bridge.

The nature of the experience illuminates some of the dynamics for the percentages of child–child and child–adult interactions at the various exhibition components.

In some areas, child and adult interactions were more evenly distributed—for instance, the Scooter, Bamboo Bridge, and Lion Dance. In other areas, children, especially younger ones, needed caregiver assistance in order to engage. For instance, the Interactive Map required reading ability and had usability issues, so it is not surprising that it had a high percentage of families with child–adult interaction. Another example was Dress-Up, where children sometimes needed the assistance of caregivers to put on the clothing.

At the bottom of the list were those that children tended to either play by themselves (Rice-Cake Puzzle) or were separated from caregivers (e.g., Water Puppets).

Families with more than one child in which at least two children interacted

Area	% of observed families who visited the area (N = 27)
Courtyard: Fireworks	69%
Lion Dance	55%
Scooter	44%
Bàu Cua Cá Cọp	42%
Kitchen	38%
Marketplace	33%
Living Room: Family Photos	29%
Music Pavilion	29%
Water Puppets	28%
Interactive Map	25%
Living Room: Dress-Up	25%
Bamboo Bridge	12%
Courtyard: Outside Cooktop	10%
New Year's Gateway	0%
Lucky Money Tree	0%
Zodiac Wheel	0%
Courtyard: Rice-Cake Puzzle	0%
Living Room: Ancestor Altar	0%

Families in which at least one child interacted with an adult

Area	% of observed families who visited the area (N = 39)
Scooter	74%
Interactive Map	71%
Bamboo Bridge	62%
Lion Dance	56%
Kitchen	55%
New Year's Gateway	50%
Living Room: Dress-Up	50%
Courtyard: Fireworks	47%
Zodiac Wheel	38%
Bàu Cua Cá Cọp	32%
Marketplace: Fruit Stand	30%
Music Pavilion	28%
Living Room: Ancestor Altar	25%
Living Room: Family Photos	22%
Courtyard: Rice-Cake Puzzle	18%
Water Puppets	10%
Courtyard: Outside Cooktop	8%
Lucky Money Tree	0%

Engagement, cont'd.

Relative Success of Exhibition Areas

Although *Voyage to Vietnam* engaged families and was quite successful, each exhibit area and its components had strengths and challenges, which included: 1) how they encouraged interactions and culture talk among a family; 2) whether cultural messages were interwoven into the experiences; and 3) usability issues.

In general, areas that successfully encouraged families to experience and even talk about Vietnam and Vietnamese culture included the Market Place, the Kitchen, the Altar, Lion Dance, Music Pavilion, and the Scooter. Areas such as the Marketplace and Kitchen, for example, encouraged families to explore and talk about daily life. These were easy places for families to draw on their own experiences of shopping and cooking. The Scooter evoked city life in Vietnam and groups often talked about (and were amused by) the idea of entire families riding through a congested city on such a vehicle. Areas such as the Lion Dance and Music Pavilion provided insights into cultural traditions, and families often discussed them in relation to Vietnamese culture and traditions. Still other areas, such as the Altar and Family Photos, helped some families reflect on important cultural values such as honoring family.

While most areas were successful, some components had significant usability issues, particularly the Interactive Map and Water Puppets. While the Interactive Map included rich information, it required significant help from adults and was most appropriate for older children. Families had considerable difficulty using the interactive features. At the Water Puppets component, children were so focused on moving the puppets back and forth that it distracted them from using the component for storytelling. Additionally, families did not connect the interactive to the nearby books, which were intended to prompt them to consider using the component for story-telling.

Due to lack of physical props, a few areas were initially less engaging during our study, such as the Café and the Plank Bed; concerns were easily addressed through the inclusion of more props. A few other areas, such as the Zodiac Wheel and Money Tree, were also less visited due to placement.

Appendix F provides detailed discussion of each area, including strengths and challenges. The Remediation Table (Appendix A) also highlights issues with specific areas and potential remediation.



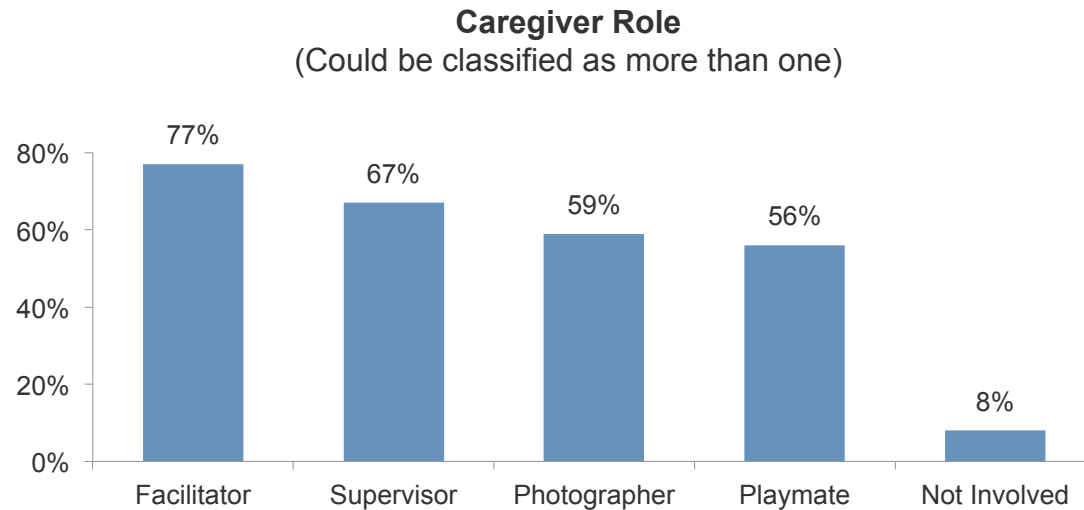
A man talks to a boy as he and another child pretend to ride the Scooter. The Scooter was an area that evoked daily life in Vietnam.



A toddler tries to move the Water Puppets from the front of the interactive. In addition to usability issues, the cultural use of puppets for storytelling was not apparent; most families did not see the connection between the Vietnamese books at the bench and the Puppets.

Engagement, cont'd.

Caregivers took on varied and multiple roles in their group during a single visit. The histogram below shows the frequency of caregiver roles often played in response to children's needs and group dynamics.



Source: Observations; N = 39

The majority of caregivers (77%) were observed facilitating their children's activities in *Voyage to Vietnam* at some point during their family's visit. For instance, caregivers called their children's attention to a component or read them the labels. In some cases, caregivers said that they found it challenging to support their children's learning about Vietnam while learning new content themselves.

More than half the caregivers observed (67%) took the role of supervising their children

during their visit. For example, caregivers made sure their children did not throw the dice too hard in *Bầu Cua Cá Cọp*, kept the dishes in the Kitchen area, or stayed inside the exhibition itself.

Caregivers were also observed photographing or recording their child/children in more than half the groups (59%). Common photo opportunities included children performing in Lion Dance, performing the instruments in Music Pavilion, and riding the Scooter.



A parent balances on the Bamboo Bridge while her child watches. Some of the areas/components, particularly the Bamboo Bridge, Fireworks, Lion Dance and Music Pavilion, were as appealing and fun to the adults as to the children.

In 56% of groups, caregivers assumed the role of playmates with their children. For example, caregivers acted as customers in the Café waiting to be served food by their children or attempted to cross the Bamboo Bridge with their children. Caregivers often helped keep their children's play going, particularly at *Bầu Cua Cá Cọp*, the Kitchen, and the Marketplace.

Engagement, cont'd.

Of observed groups, 72% read exhibit signs and labels at some point during their visit. The most common use of labels involved a caregiver or older child reading the text aloud to the group.

Researchers also frequently observed parents reading labels silently to themselves as their children played. During interviews, caregivers said they were able to improve their own understanding of Vietnamese culture during their family's visit by reading the labels, but that they sometimes struggled to share their learning with their children. Families with very active children moved through the exhibition quickly, leaving the adults little time to read labels or reflect on how to start conversations about Vietnam.

Not surprisingly, families were most likely to read labels in areas where they spent more time—for instance, the Bamboo Bridge, the Scooter, and the Marketplace. Some labels, however, were not read where families spent longer times because of label placement. For example, the average stay time at Fireworks was nearly four minutes, but we observed few visitors using the labels. Many caregivers, watching what their children were doing on screen and trying to interact with them, did not notice the mounted label on the wall.

The Lion Dance was another area where families tended to spend time but did not read the label. In this case, the label was mounted on a side wall, inside the Lion Dance structure, making it hard to see and obtrusive to read while others used the unit.

Use of trilingual Labels

Overall, families noticed and acknowledged the trilingual interpretation. Many Spanish-speaking and bilingual Spanish/English families expressed appreciation for the trilingual labels and CDM's acknowledgement of their community's needs. Families who were primarily English-speaking also appreciated the trilingual labels, and some were observed using the labels to practice Spanish or showing each other written Vietnamese. For instance, the following was taken from field notes:

At the Outdoor Kitchen, the woman notices the trilingual labels, and she reads one of them. She signals to her 7-year-old daughter to read the English one... Her mother helps the girl by reading it to her... The woman points to the Spanish one and asks the girl to read aloud the Spanish word. The girl tries to sound out the word as her mother sounds it out with her.

Of the groups interviewed, 7 were Spanish-speaking or bilingual Spanish/English and 6 reported using Spanish or both Spanish and English labels. (As previously noted, this portion of the summative study did not include Vietnamese families. A separate report addendum focused on that audience.)

Everything is well-explained. There was all sorts of information about Vietnamese culture.

There is enough information on the flower petal labels for people to get a sense of what the exhibit is about.

To put a whole bunch of signs up is great for adults like me, but for younger children, like my son, there's nothing really telling them what to take away from the exhibit. Like, "You are now entering the Tết festival."... Then, when he would leave, it's like, "Mommy, did you hear him say that?"

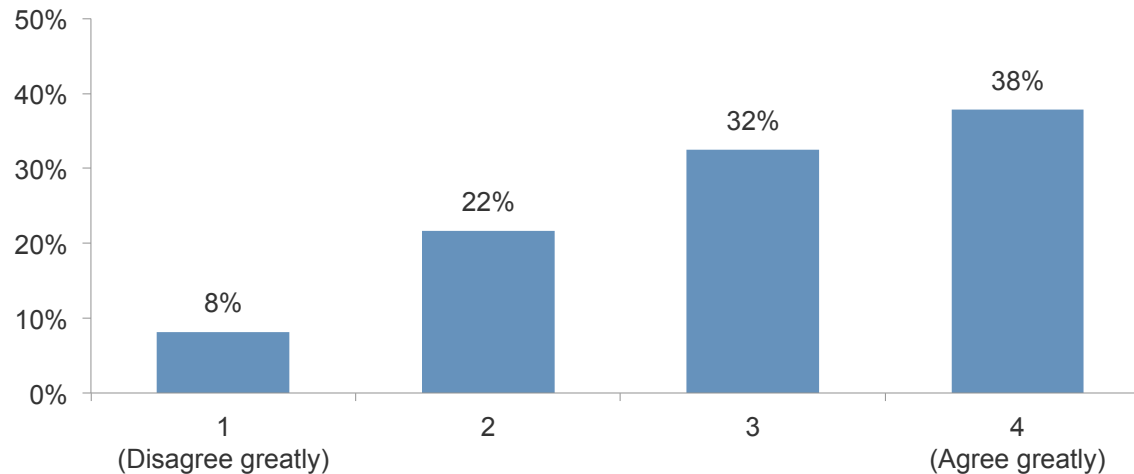


An example of a trilingual standing sign, which were noticed and appreciated by families. While accessing the Spanish and Vietnamese labels was intuitive, visitors had to hold both sides open to see all three languages, which was awkward and challenging.

Cultural Understanding

Survey respondents were asked to rate the statement “The exhibition helped my family learn about Vietnam” on a scale of 1- 4 (1 = “disagree greatly” and 4 = “agree greatly”). 70% of survey respondents rated their agreement a “3” or “4.”

Rate your level of agreement with the following statement: “The exhibit helped my family learn about Vietnam.”



Source: Exit Survey; N = 111

He learned about geography and location... That it is close to China and Thailand.

Music is something that we're interested in and I liked learning about the traditional instruments and what they're called.

[I] Didn't know how/that they cooked outside.

[We learned about] the diet. There were many interesting fruits and vegetables.

Vietnamese have a dragon dance too! It's not just us Chinese!

I learned things like that the dragon [lion] isn't just from China, but also to other countries, like Vietnam.

I learned that they have some of the fruit we have in Mexico, like the [custard apple].

I didn't know that they had a New Year's that was different from the Western New Year's.

We learned about the dragon dance—it's actually a lion—and the different types of foods they make on the holiday of Tết, like rice cakes.

When survey respondents were asked what they learned in the exhibition, many said the exhibition gave them a sense of daily life in Vietnam. For instance, they learned about Vietnamese food, modes of transportation, and furniture. Traditions and celebrations, specifically Tết, were another form of cultural expression that respondents said they learned about. The Lion Dance, in particular, was what respondents cited most when talking about Tết traditions. Vietnamese geography was also something respondents said they learned in the exhibition.

Some respondents said they learned how Vietnamese culture was similar (or different) to other cultures, most often comparing it to Chinese culture. Respondents mentioned fruits and musical instruments, in particular, as evidence of how Vietnamese culture differed from others.

The very few respondents that said their families did not learn much in the exhibition cited a few reasons, including not spending very much time in the exhibition or having children too young to engage with the content.

Cultural Understanding, cont'd.

As described in the Theoretical Approach and Methods section, this study used a cultural framework comprised of three dimensions to assess the overall exhibition outcome. In this section of the report we discuss family interactions through this lens.

Engagement: Encountering and Exploring Explicit Culture

We first examined whether and how families engaged with the explicit dimensions of culture in the exhibition. Engagement with and exploration of explicit culture provided a concrete basis for families to learn about and understand Vietnam and Vietnamese culture. In *Voyage to Vietnam*, families engaged physically with material culture (e.g., objects, clothing), which also included role-playing and imaginative play within the context of Vietnam. To a lesser extent, families also engaged with Vietnamese customs, rituals, and language.

A strength of the exhibition was the direct experience with authentic Vietnamese material culture. Families could see and hear real Vietnamese instruments and sit on a real Vespa Scooter, just as Vietnamese families do every day.

The following, taken from field notes, is an example of families encountering and exploring the explicit aspects of Vietnamese culture.

The younger siblings stay at the Fruit Stand to pick fruit, but the 8-year-old girl sees the Bamboo Pole and leaves the group to try it out. She steps on the bamboo and walks down it without the baskets. She says, "Yes! This is so hard!" and is really excited about it. She walks down the bamboo one more time without baskets. Then she balances baskets on her shoulders and walks down the bamboo. She is excited when she finishes. She calls over to her 5-year-old sister and 3-year-old brother, "I can carry the fruit." The younger girl starts putting fruit in one side of the baskets. The older girl says, "It's not even; put some on the other side." Now loaded with star fruit, the older girl walks down the bamboo one more time. She makes a dramatic sigh and seems very pleased with herself.

Note the ways the family interacted with explicit aspects of culture—they touched replicas of Vietnamese food, they tried to cross traditional bridges, and carried typical Vietnamese food using a traditional tool.

Families also explored Vietnamese culture through role-playing and imaginary play situated in environments that helped them put themselves in a context that felt to them like Vietnam.

This was especially the case in the areas of the Marketplace, Kitchen, and the Dress-Up area of the Living Room. For instance, children pretended to shop at the Marketplace for fruit (for instance, custard apples and star fruit) and fish typically found in a Vietnamese market using the same type of shopping bags used in Vietnam. They pretended to cook in an outdoor kitchen using traditional Vietnamese utensils and wearing an áo dài.

Cultural Understanding, cont'd.

The following is an example of the kind of imaginary play observed at the Café:

The 4-year-old girl moves into the Café. She asks, "Would you like to buy some food?" Her mother responds, "Yes, and I would like a papaya. But, oh no, I have no money." The girl laughs. She says, "Now I want to try. You help me!" She switches places with her mother, so now she is standing in the Café window. She places orders, "I want two of these and two of those." She continues ordering. Meanwhile her other mother says, "I need to figure out what these are." The first mother walks over to the fruit ID label. "Oooh, star fruit! I've only seen them sliced." They are all seated in the Café. The girl asks, "Do you want a coffee?" The first mother laughs, "Oh you're offering us coffee? Do YOU want to drink coffee?" They laugh. The girl says, "I don't have any coffee, I only sell fruit." She points to the menu. "I want this one." The other mother says, "You'll have to go next door." The first woman looks at the other menus as the girl brings dishes over from kitchen. She asks her wife, "Is that gelatin? I can't imagine drinking that!" The girl returns, "I want some—that!" while pointing to a menu. The second mother says, "Do you know what that is? It's a special drink. It looks like ice cream, but it's not." The girl says, "Ooooh."

In addition to exploring material culture and engaging in role-playing and imaginary play, families also engaged with Vietnamese customs, traditions, and rituals in the exhibition. For instance, they sat in typical Vietnamese chairs and pretended to have tea in the Café. They tried the Lion Dance costume used during Tết celebrations and designed firework displays to celebrate Vietnamese holidays. They saw how rice cakes (a typical Vietnamese holiday food) were made and took their own family photos to add to a typical Vietnamese family photo display.

The following example was taken from observation field notes:

A man takes video of his 8-year-old daughter using the mouth and eyes of the Lion Dance costume. He calls out, "Eyes, Eyes, Mouth, Eyes," telling her what to move. Next he calls out expressions she can make. "Can you make him angry? Can you make him surprised?" She thinks for a little bit before each expression, but is able to make them easily. Her father continues, "Can you make him confused?" The girl isn't sure what to do. He suggests, "Don't you tilt your head to the side sometimes where you're confused?"

Awareness that Exhibition was About Vietnam

During interviews, we asked families what country the exhibition was about so that we could understand the context of their visit. Of observed respondents, 80% said the exhibition was about Vietnam. When asked how they knew it was about Vietnam, the most common answer was that it was named frequently in the labels and signs. Those who did not realize the exhibition was about Vietnam were visitors who said they tended not to pay attention to labels when they visited museums.

Confusion with China

Many respondents familiar with the lion dances and fireworks before visiting the exhibition associated them with China and the Chinese New Year (some children studied the Chinese New Year in school). While the similarities between Chinese and Vietnamese celebrations allowed some families to reflect on the countries' shared traditions and history, it more frequently caused confusion between the two countries. As a result, the areas of the exhibition associated with multiple Asian cultures may require additional interpretation and support to help visitors distinguish between Asian countries.

Cultural Understanding, cont'd.

Culture Talk: Discussing Explicit & Tacit Culture

The next aspect we looked for in observations was the talk during families' visits to the exhibition and the extent to which conversations focused on cultural content.

Families' cultural conversations have distinct forms in a children's museum such as CDM. Based on exit surveys, 50% of children with visiting families were aged 3–5; as a result, such groups will not likely have long, extended conversations. These cultural conversations are usually in the form of snippets or short chats, which is appropriate given the developmental stage of these children. The sharing of short snippets of cultural facts and ideas complements the engagement children have with the exhibition and is an important way for families to talk about the complex subject of culture, despite its sometimes appearing very brief to an observer.

72% of families engaged in some form of culture talk. Of those that did not engage in culture talk, 54% were groups with children aged 5 and under.

Areas particularly successful in encouraging conversations about Vietnamese culture were the Music Pavilion, Lion Dance, Altar, Scooter, and Kitchen.

One common type of culture talk at *Voyage to Vietnam* involved caregivers pointing out and drawing their children's attention to specific components while they explored the material culture. For example:

The father noticed the Zodiac Wheel and called his 8-year-old daughter over. The mother says, "What year were you born?" The girl looks up her birthday and reads the information silently. "I'm a pig!" She seems disappointed, but laughs about it. The father says, "Pigs are very smart!"

This type of culture talk is significant because it is an initial way for caregivers to help their children connect a new culture to their existing experience and understanding. For instance, a parent might call attention to the Lion Dance and remind the child that they had seen one before or point it out because the child likes lions.

The next most common type of culture talk among families concerned material culture, holidays, or traditions. Adults were helping their children explore and connect to the material culture. The three following examples were taken from observation field notes:

The mother says, "These are instruments from Vietnam. This is a Vietnamese violin. This is like a bow, you play it against the strings." She asks, "Do these instruments remind you of anything?" The 7-year-old girl points to the flute and says, "That's just a



One woman watches the Lion Dance video while another woman and a toddler play with the costume. Though the exhibition was geared to children, adults also found it engaging and specifically mentioned the attractiveness and cultural significance of the Altar, the beauty and striking nature of the Lion Dance, the beauty and authenticity of the instruments in the Music Pavilion, and the Interactive Map's abundance of information.



Adults wearing áo dài sit at the Celebration Table while children serve them. Caregivers often played along with their children's imaginary scenarios in *Voyage to Vietnam*.

Cultural Understanding, cont'd.

flute." She continues to play the flute for 30 seconds. The woman looks at the display instruments. "Oh, these are the same instruments as up here. They're beautiful."

The 6-year-old boy grabs the broom and begins to sweep the floor. "It's a Vietnamese broom," his mother tells him. He then grabs a fish. "They cook a lot of fish because they have a lot of coastal areas, it's easy access to seafood," she says.

The 8-year-old girl goes over to the rice puzzle. She moves all the pictures so that they align. Her father comes over and reads the nearby label. "It's a very traditional thing," he says. Her five-year-old brother comes over and says, "It's Chinese New Year." The father tells him it's actually Vietnam.

Recognizing the material culture of Vietnam helps children understand that Vietnamese culture is distinct. Furthermore, if they encounter such explicit cultural expressions later in life, they will have a basis for placing them within the context of Vietnamese culture. All the conversations with their caregivers supported this process.

Much less common was cultural talk involving tacit Vietnamese culture (e.g., values, beliefs, norms). This type of talk, when observed, took place in the Living Room, the area most closely connected to the cultural value of honoring elders. The following is one example from field notes:

The grandmother is standing beside the Family Altar reading the label. The 7-year-old girl reaches out to touch one of the incense sticks as her grandmother tells her not to touch that area. The grandmother mentions that the area is not for playing that it's a "special area." The girl asks why and the grandmother explains that it is something Vietnamese people do to pray for their family members, and for the elderly people or those that have passed away. The girl touches the sake cups and asks why there are sake cups. Her grandmother explains that those are there for decoration or to drink tea with family members.

Tết as the Main Topic of the Exhibition

Nearly all families skipped reading the initial label introducing Thao and her family and their celebration of Tết, mostly because the Scooter and other components of the exhibition that could be seen from the entrance were so compelling that no one wanted to stand and read a label. As a result, many did not always grasp the exhibition's setting being of a Vietnamese girl sharing Tết traditions. While families had worthwhile and rich experiences in *Voyage to Vietnam* without realizing this detail, the cultural significance of celebrating Lunar New Year was lost.

Cultural Understanding, cont'd.

Similarities and Differences

The exhibition also strove to give families the opportunity to discover similarities and differences between their lives and the lives of children in Vietnam. This is actually an important aspect of developing awareness of other cultures because one cannot do so without also reflecting on one's own culture.

Comparing Vietnamese life and culture with their own was often observed in this study. Families drew similarities and differences to their own lives throughout the exhibition. Most of these conversations centered on material culture, holidays, and traditions.

Many comparisons were made at the Scooter; most children had seen a Vespa, but not in the context of a crowded Vietnamese market. One group, for example, discussed how their grandfather would ride a similar scooter when he lived in India. Families with multiple children were intrigued by the idea of multiple people riding the scooter, since that was not how they typically saw scooters used.

Food and related objects in *Voyage to Vietnam* was one common topic that provoked discussions of similarities and differences, especially when discussing the similarities of the markets and the kitchen to their own stores and homes. For instance, here are several examples from observation field notes:

A 9-year-old boy races in from the entrance to use Bamboo Bridge. He immediately picks up the baskets, places them over his shoulders, and tries to walk down the bamboo pole. His mother joins him and asks, "Is it heavy?" He shakes his head "No." She continues, "Well there's nothing in there. You have to add things to carry."...She adds, "You know how we keep grocery bags in the car? You could use these instead." They both laugh. The boy adds, "That would be more fun, but also more dangerous."

The woman asks the 6-year-old girl, "I wonder if this is what their grocery stores look like in Vietnam."

The 7-year-old girl and 3-year-old boy play pretend with both the stovetops. "It's so much like India. We have this [the stovetops] back home!" said the Indian-American mother. "Even the scooter part!" she exclaims. "That is not something we have back home," she tells the girl about the fish and says they don't eat meat.... The family talks about how they were just in India visiting and it's just like back home in this space and everything is very familiar.

In a few cases, visitors made comparisons that led to the wrong conclusion. For example, this mother assumed Vietnam does not have many cars:



A woman talks with a toddler while they sit in the Café. Areas depicting everyday activities involving food were places for families to easily compare and contrast their lives with those of people in Vietnam.

Cultural Understanding, cont'd.

The mother tries to cross Bamboo Bridge. "This is hard. There's a lot of water in Vietnam, so this is how you carry your food home, not a lot of cars in Vietnam," she tells her daughter. The girl tries to cross the bridge. Her mother tells her to try it barefoot, and says, "Bamboo bridges are in the rice fields, lots of water in the rice fields."

Another subject in which similarities and differences were discussed was holidays and celebrations. For instance, families viewed fireworks as a shared way of celebrating holidays, comparing their use at Lunar New Year to fireworks on July 4 in the U.S.

Similarities and differences between cultures were also discussed at the Music Pavilion. Families were observed comparing the instruments to ones they already knew and pointing out ones completely new to them. For instance, the Moon Lute was compared to a violin and banjo, while the Dan Bau (monochord) was seen as unique to Vietnamese culture.

While comparisons of explicit Vietnamese culture were common in the exhibition, discussions about Vietnamese cultural values occurred less frequently. Here is one example:

The mother and father talked about the Altar in relation to Día de los Muertos, and as something that they have in their own life, which is also similarly a part of Vietnamese culture.

Conversations where families discussed the similarities and differences between their own culture and Vietnamese culture suggest that the exhibition may be aiding some visitors in developing cultural understanding and openness by allowing them to reflect on their own cultural practices (Winkelman, 2009).

Culture talk springing from the exhibition was based on where children were developmentally, what areas families engaged with, and where they engaged the most. The important aspect of the culture talk in *Voyage to Vietnam* was that families' conversations about Vietnamese culture and cultural practices helped them begin making connections to another culture, think about similarities and differences between their own culture and Vietnamese culture, and consider daily life in a different country.



A family looks at the Family Photos in the Living Room. If a family had a conversation about Vietnamese cultural values while in the exhibition, it almost always occurred in the Living Room, amidst the Altar and Family Photos.

Cultural Understanding, cont'd.

Reflection & Synthesis

Families' discussions in *Voyage to Vietnam*—while often limited by the ages of children and other characteristics of the family and their particular visit—did include what can be considered culture talk. This talk about Vietnamese culture and cultural practices, along with the engagement with explicit culture, is a step in developing cultural understanding. Post-visit interviews illuminated how families reflected on their experiences and wove them into their understanding of Vietnam and Vietnamese culture.

When we talked with caregivers about what they thought their family was taking from *Voyage to Vietnam*, they articulated the following categories:

- *An Understanding of Vietnam as a Country:* Caregivers indicated that most of their children did not know Vietnam was a country before visiting this exhibition. They appreciated the chance to introduce geographically and culturally their children to Vietnam.
- *A Sense of Daily Life:* Caregivers said the experience gave their children a sense of Vietnam. They saw the exhibition as being primarily about everyday life in Vietnam, which was important. For instance, one caregiver said, "It's a small but important lesson that people living in a different country do things a little different. Vietnamese families cook outside, they don't just fire up a stove. Small differences like that are significant because they make up everyday life."
- *Values of the Vietnamese Culture:* Families said they understood the important family-oriented aspect to Vietnamese culture (e.g., altars to ancestors, family pictures, doing things together as a family), which other cultures share.
- *Hands-on Learning about Culture:* Families learn about culture in a hands-on, direct way as opposed to only reading about it. For instance, one mother said that her daughter "learned in school about the dragon [lion] dance, but now she can actually play with it."
- *Reflections on Different Aspects of Culture:* In a few interviews, visitors indicated the exhibition sparked their thinking about what makes a culture. For example, one woman said, "I think [I'll remember]...the puppets and the music. These are things I didn't know are part of the culture."
- *Cultures Can be Both Similar and Different:* As described in the examples on "culture talk" many families compared and contrasted Vietnamese culture with their own. They saw differences and similarities. Survey data (see next page) reinforced that this was a main takeaway from the experience.

When I've gone into restaurants or small stores, I've seen [altars], but I've never quite understood what they represented or known what they were for. So with the little signs explaining it, what the tea cups meant, that they are in remembrance for family, I actually got to learn something. As an adult, growing older, it's eventually something we have to think about. So just seeing how different cultures remember their loved ones. So I thought it was cool. I had seen them before and now I know what they mean.

Nowadays it's a different style of cooking, where you have metal utensils, you have the different kind of fuel used...but in my childhood, in India, I've seen my grandma and all, they were cooking with these clay ones, and then the fuel also was like the stove in the exhibit. So it's good to see a kitchen like that, otherwise she [my daughter] would never know that there's something like that.

Vietnam and the U.S. are different countries in terms of life style and culture, but some things are similar—like the way that families spend their holiday's together, and New Year's; we both have one, just at different times. So things are similar yet different.

The food and customs are similar to some Mexican heritage traditions.

Honoring ancestors is like my family in China. I noticed that.

The daily activities children engage in [in Vietnam and the U.S.] are very different.

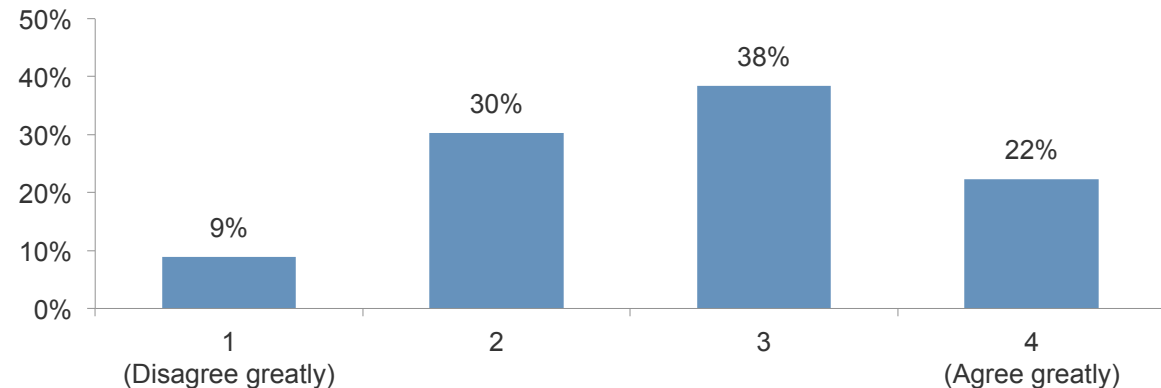
The food and cooking is similar [to my culture] and the family stuff. Some activities are different. Like cooking outside.

Cultural Understanding, cont'd.

On a 1–4 scale, where 1 was “disagree greatly” and 4 was “agree greatly,” 60% of exit survey respondents rated the statement “The exhibit helped us discover similarities and differences between children’s lives in Vietnam and the United States” a “3” or “4.”

During interviews, families indicated that in the end, similarities came through more than differences. Many groups stated that the exhibition helped them see their lives as more similar to Vietnamese culture than they had previously thought, particularly within the themes of food, family, and celebrations. Furthermore, recognizing similarities and differences seemed to help families learn about their own culture as well as Vietnamese culture.

Rate your level of agreement with the following statement: “The exhibit helped us discover similarities and differences between children’s lives in Vietnam and the United States.”



Source: Exit Survey; N = 112

Cultural Understanding, cont'd.

Increased Interest in Vietnam and Vietnamese Culture

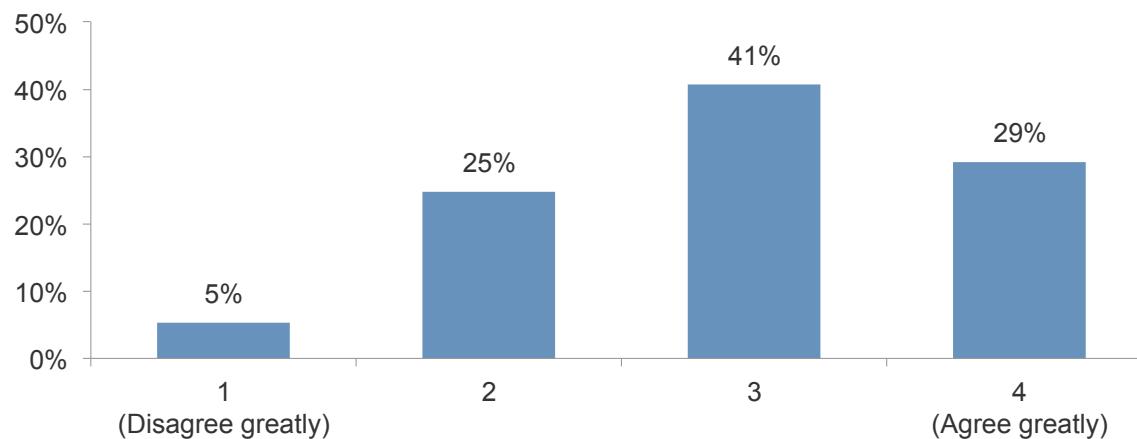
There was evidence that *Voyage to Vietnam* increased families' interest in Vietnam and Vietnamese culture. On a 1–4 scale, where 1 was “disagree greatly” and 4 was “agree greatly,” 70% of survey respondents rated their belief that the exhibition helped their families learn about Vietnam as a “3” or “4.”

Interviews with families also indicated that the exhibition increased their interest in Vietnamese culture. Some ways families said they would like to continue exploring Vietnamese culture after the visit were to search out Vietnamese fruits in their local

grocery store, to eat at a Vietnamese restaurant, and to look for local Vietnamese festivals and celebrations. Due to the high Vietnamese population in San Jose, many respondents already knew of local Vietnamese businesses and cultural organizations where they could further explore Vietnamese culture.

In some cases, families became more generally interested in Asian. For instance, after recognizing similarities between Vietnam and other Asian cultures, some expressed a desire to know more about shared customs and traditions, such as the lion dance and fireworks.

Rate your level of agreement with the following statement: “The exhibit helped my family become more interested in Vietnam.”



Source: Exit Survey; N = 113

[After visiting Voyage to Vietnam] I'll try to teach him [my son] more about Vietnam and other Asian countries.

You always want them to try new things and seeing [new fruits] in a place like this makes them curious. We'll definitely look into trying them at home. We even looked up the names of the fruits and while they were playing looked into if we'd need to go to a specialty grocer to get them. Could be a fun trip with the kids.

We'll probably go back home and make tea.... we're going to go try incense sticks, right? [Asking her son]. Want to try an incense stick at home?

We have a lot of friends from, you know, Vietnam, Asia, [and] Malaysia, but there's a lot of questions I've never taken the time to ask or thought about....And I mean, the exhibit helped to answer some questions, and also has kind of prompted more of a dialogue, maybe.

From field notes:

The father goes back and sits on the bench. The 8-year-old girl comes over and says she's hungry. He tells her they should get Vietnamese food. "What's Vietnamese food?" she asks. "It's kind of like Chinese, it's very yummy," he tells her. "I want to go to PF Chang's," she replies, but her father tells her they are going to get Vietnamese food when they leave.

Cultural Understanding, cont'd.

Several design strategies significantly helped *Voyage to Vietnam* achieve its goal of providing an opportunity for families to gain understanding, appreciation, and respect for Vietnamese culture. These included:

- *Focus on Daily Life:* The primary focus on daily life in the exhibition was appropriate and compelling for the targeted age range. Caregivers said that everyday activities were easy for their children to understand and interact with, and helped them begin to make comparisons to another culture. Moreover, the activities were family focused, so everyone could be involved and the message of the family-centeredness of Vietnamese culture was reinforced.
- *The Look and Feel:* The overall look and feel of the exhibition helped families understand life in Vietnam. Authentic objects used by people in Vietnam, ranging from the Vespa Scooter, the Altar, and the Lion Dance costume to the shopping bags, clothing, and baskets, gave the exhibition its true-to-life feeling. Thus, the exhibition's environment provided many play opportunities situated with the context of Vietnam.

- *Exposure Through Play:* Caregivers valued an exhibition that allowed their family to explore and engage with another culture in an environment centered on play. That is, children explored and engaged with cultural content, on their own terms, incorporating cultural materials and practices into their role-playing and imaginary play.

Instead of being told about Vietnamese fruits, children could see them at the Fruit Stand, choose to interact, and follow their own inclinations and curiosity to learn more. Some caregivers explained that the lessons learned about a culture in a classroom may fade, but the chance to interact with the culture in a physical, playful way makes it more memorable.

He's [my son's] just seeing how other cultures have things in their life, or if he's seen it before, then he may see it in a different realm.

They [children] can read about places, but this is a unique chance to incorporate it into their play.

[In this exhibition] You're learning without compromising play.

This exhibit helps me encourage my child to try new things.

It [Voyage to Vietnam] gave me a better picture of life in Vietnam.



A group of mixed-aged visitors plays several rounds of *Bầu Cua Cá Cọp* together. The opportunity to play with Vietnamese cultural materials—and thereby interact with and explore Vietnamese culture—was a strength of the exhibition.

Perceived Value of Cultural Exhibitions

Caregivers saw cultural exhibitions in children's museums as having unique benefits for their children. Nearly all respondents saw value in cultural exhibitions because these exhibitions expose their children to new ideas and different ways of living.

Caregivers noted that in cultural exhibitions, their children could play and explore authentic material culture in a safe environment. Caregivers also shared that these type of exhibitions give families opportunities to explore a different culture without expensive travel to another country. Furthermore, they noted that cultural exhibitions based on direct engagement with authentic material culture are more compelling and memorable to children than reading about a culture; it also complements the formal learning about other cultures that takes place in schools.

Even if respondents felt their children were too young to explore another culture in depth, they still valued the experience because cultural exhibitions like *Voyage to Vietnam* provide introductions to new cultures on which families can build as their children grow.

Respondents who identified strongly with a country or culture other than that of the U.S. saw similar value and shared that they appreciated that CDM represents a diversity of ethnic backgrounds in its exhibitions. Some even expressed a desire for an exhibition like *Voyage to Vietnam* about their own culture.

All respondents, regardless of background, said learning about other cultures was important because it helps children respond to differences with respect, compassion, and curiosity. They considered respect for diversity to be an important value, not only for citizens of the San Jose area and California, but also for their families as global citizens.

It teaches you about history and teaches you how to respect other cultures, ... what they are about, because it's different than what we are about... respect each that we're different. We come from different cultures. We have European culture, we have Vietnamese culture, Japanese culture—they're all as one. At least in here is how we grow a melting pot.

Just puts a different context on a space instead of being taught in a classroom. It's a hands-on learning experience and easier for them to remember when they learn on-site.

They (kids) are too young, but something like this is good exposure. So that kids can explore later on their own terms.

I think it's great, especially here in America where we're a multi-cultural thing. There are so many dimensions to every culture that has a stake in the U.S. We should know how to relate to each other.

It was a nice surprise to see that this kind of exhibit is there in the Children's Museum, because to begin, Children's Museum, you expect that you will see the standard stuff, correct? And not much focus on the cultural aspects—the focus is on either the history of places... how a fire truck works, how a police stations works, bubbles, those kinds of stuff. But it's important for kids to know this stuff [about other cultures]. And now, I'm sure that [my daughter] will be able to recognize this stuff, and then if something comes up, then she will quickly relate it, and will ask more questions.

It's always interesting, because it exposes not just them, but also me to something different, and helps me to learn more, and then talk to them about it.

[It] Helps you realize the differences between Asian cultures. Gets us thinking about stuff outside our knowledge base!

Sometimes it is difficult for people to travel outside of the country... it's even hard to travel out of state, so having access to museums or places that help people learn about other cultures is more convenient and accessible than traveling.

[It allows her] To be able to get to see another part of the world. She wouldn't get to go there in real life, so it's like bringing that country to her.

Conclusions



Conclusions

Voyage to Vietnam successfully achieved its overall goals. Below we synthesize the extent to which outcomes were met.

This evaluation found strong evidence that *Voyage to Vietnam* met its goals of helping children ages 3–10 and their families engage with the traditions of Tết and learn more about Vietnam. Families were highly satisfied with the exhibition, 95% of them rating their overall experience in *Voyage to Vietnam* as “excellent” or “good.” Likewise, families enjoyed their experiences in the exhibition, with 93% of them rating their family’s enjoyment as a “3” or “4” on a 1–4 scale (1 was “very low” and 4 was “very high”). Nearly all caregivers (88%) considered the exhibition age-appropriate for their children.

In addition to satisfaction and enjoyment, *Voyage to Vietnam* helped families learn about and explore Vietnam and Vietnamese culture based on the framework of engagement, culture talk, and reflection and synthesis used in this study.

Time spent in the exhibition, a broad measure of engagement, was substantial, with more than two-thirds of survey respondents reporting that their families spent 15 minutes or more in *Voyage to Vietnam*. In addition, the quality of the engagement was high. Through this exhibition, families encountered and explored the explicit culture of Vietnam. A strength of the exhibition, in fact, was the direct experience of children and their caregivers with authentic Vietnamese material culture; they were also able to incorporate role-playing and imaginary play into their experience.

There was also evidence that the exhibition engaged both adults and children. A majority of exit survey respondents (70%) agreed that the exhibition helped their family learn about Vietnam. In interviews, caregivers said that *Voyage to Vietnam* not only helped their children learn about Vietnam, but also improved their own understanding of the country and helped them think about how to further support their child’s learning. Nevertheless, some caregivers, particularly those with young children, sometimes struggled with knowing what was appropriate developmentally to share with their children about Vietnam and Vietnamese culture. While we observed them sharing appropriate information about Vietnam (e.g., Vietnam is a country), some were not confident in their facilitation.

In addition to direct engagement with Vietnamese culture, the exhibition fostered significant “culture talk;” families discussed explicit and, to a lesser extent. Of families observed, 72% engaged in some form of culture talk. Discussions often involved caregivers explaining the significance certain objects, holidays, or traditions; and discussing similarities and differences between their own and Vietnamese culture. These types of family conversations during a visit form the basis for future awareness and exploration of cultures.

This study found evidence that families were reflecting on and synthesizing their experiences in *Voyage to Vietnam*, which is an important component of developing cultural understanding. When caregivers talked about what their families were taking away from their experiences in the exhibition, the following six categories of responses emerged:

- An understanding of Vietnam as a country;
- A sense of daily life in Vietnam;
- Values of the Vietnamese culture;
- Hands-on learning about culture;
- Reflections on different aspects of culture; and
- That cultures can be both similar and different.

This evaluation also found evidence that *Voyage to Vietnam* increased families’ interest in Vietnam and Vietnamese culture, with 70% of respondents rating their agreement that the exhibition helped their families learn about Vietnam as a “3” or “4” on a 1–4 scale (with 1 “very low” and 4 “very high”).

Finally, several design strategies contributed to the successful interactions and outcomes, including, the focus on daily life, the overall “look and feel” of the exhibit, and allowing children to explore culture through play.

References



References

- Babbie, E. (1998). *The practice of social research*. Albany, New York: Wadsworth Publishing Company.
- Burchum, J. L. R. (2002), Cultural competence: an evolutionary perspective. *Nursing Forum*, 37: 5–15.
- Frierson, H. T., Hood, S., & Hughes, G. B. (2002). Strategies that address culturally-responsive evaluation. In J.F. Westat, *The 2002 user-friendly handbook for project evaluation* (pp. 63-73). Arlington, VA: National Science Foundation.
- Goode, T. (2006). *Key definitions*. Washington D.C.: National Center for Cultural Competence, Georgetown University Center for Child and Human Development.
- Greene, J.C. & Caracelli, V.J. (2003). Making paradigmatic sense of mixed methods practice. In A.Tashakkori & C.Teddlue (Eds.), *Handbook of mixed methods in social and behavioural research*, (pp. 91-110). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Hall, E. T. (1976). *Beyond culture*. New York: Doubleday.
- Heath, S. B. (2007). Diverse learning and learner diversity in “informal” science learning environments. Paper prepared for National Research Council’s Board on Science Education for Learning Science in Informal Environments Study. Retrieved from http://www7.nationalacademies.org/bose/Brice%20Heath_Commissioned_Paper.pdf.
- Miles, M. B. & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis*, 2nd ed. London: Sage.
- Patton, M. Q. (1990). *Qualitative evaluation and research methods*, 2nd ed. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Strauss, A. & Corbin, J. (1990). *Basics of qualitative research*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Winkelman, M. (2005). *Cultural awareness, sensitivity & competence*. Peosta, Iowa: Eddie Bowers Publishing Co., Inc.

Appendices



Appendix A: Remediation by Level

Remediation

We have organized our recommendations into four levels based on order of importance in supporting visitors' experiences and engagement and in meeting the exhibition's goals.

Level 1: Recommendations have a critical impact or are essential to improving visitors' experiences. These revisions are of the utmost importance and require substantial remediation.

Level 2: These recommendations for revision are mainly meant to address usability issues of specific elements. These changes must occur to make the elements more functional.

Level 3: These recommendations have mid-level importance to the visitors' experiences in the exhibition. These revisions are mainly enhancements to elements that are already successful but could use extra support. These changes do not necessarily *have* to be made, but would be beneficial in supporting visitors' cultural awareness of Vietnam and Tết.

Level 4: These recommendations have a minimum impact on visitors' experiences. These elements are successful in their current state but are ignored due to their placement in the exhibition.

Specific items for remediation are discussed by level in the table below.

Appendix A: Remediation by Level, cont'd.

Level 1		
Area	Issue	Potential Remediation
Water Puppets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There was little support for culturally appropriate storytelling. When books were used, they were treated as a separate activity rather than as prompts to tell Vietnamese stories. Children would approach puppets from the front, sometimes grabbing them or putting their fingers inside the slots while other children were operating them from the back. Since children would move the puppets aggressively, we noted a risk for injury to children's fingers. The puppets are easily broken and are small compared to actual puppets in the display case. The display puppets were infrequently noticed. When they were noticed, the play puppets were compared pejoratively. The element of water was not clear to most guests. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore ways to encourage more culturally relevant conversations and storytelling. Prompts could cue visitors to tell popular Vietnamese folk tales. Adding pictures to show what traditional water puppets look like would help with the context. Allow for a wider range of movement than simply "back and forth" to provide more expression and mitigate fast motion. Add larger, more durable puppets.
Interactive Map	<p>There were significant issues with the usability of the Interactive Map.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> While the map included many layers of information, few visitors explored them. In general, the map made it more challenging for families to know what to focus on. The ways the pop-up windows layered on top of each other eventually led the software to freeze up. The height of the table and chairs suggested that this element was appropriate for children under 7, but the interactive was very complex and required high reading proficiency. It also required a lot of support from parents in order to be used with any success. The map was not located near any other activities, so it was frequently ignored. The printed map does not label the country's capital, but the interactive map labels it as Hanoi. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore a simpler interface. The side menu provides a lot of information, but it's hard for visitors to understand what they are looking at and how to find information they are interested in. Consider ways to let visitors know what to explore in order to help them better understand what they can do at this interactive. Consider only allowing one side menu to appear at a time, as opposed to having them layer atop each other. Consider a different location or explore mounting it vertically to draw more attention to the map. Decide on a consistent approach for labeling the capital.
New Year's Gateway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Due to excitement from the other eye-catching exhibit elements that visitors can see as they enter, groups do not spend time with entrance labels or exhibit elements until exiting. Without entrance interpretation, guests are missing crucial information that orients them to Tết as the main theme of the exhibit. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore ways to have the main entry label, which sets up the Tết festival, be as noticeable as possible. The map could also be more prominent.

Appendix A: Remediation by Level, cont'd.

Level 2		
Area	Issue	Potential Remediation
Courtyard: Fireworks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some minor usability issues frustrate visitors but do not prevent them from having enjoyable experiences with the Fireworks. The main issue is the time delay between preparing a firework show and having it appear in the Night Sky. The countdown has groups waiting for more than a minute, sometimes two. Additionally, as the countdown nears closer to zero, groups often count down aloud only to have to wait another 10-15 seconds as the show loads. This was a popular exhibit element, so the delay meant crowds could form. Kids grew impatient waiting for their turn. Some even tried to insert themselves into another group's turn. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore ways to shorten the time delay between preparing a fireworks show and having it appear in the Night Sky. The wait time was frustrating for both the timed countdown and the time it took for the show to load after the countdown ended.
Marketplace: Café Props	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Families spent little time here and did not engage in depth due to the lack of objects and elements to support their play and exploration at the Café. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The addition of more elements—such as play items for the food listed and additional signage to the space—could help support a café experience.
Kitchen: “Sharing Memories”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visitors rarely watched the sharing memories videos, but the videos could communicate Vietnamese cultural and traditions surrounding Tết. The most significant barriers to use are its placement in the kitchen and the height of the screen. Children are constantly moving back and forth between the indoor and outdoor cooktops and table and are grabbing dishes underneath the screen. Unless the exhibit has an extremely small crowd, standing close enough to the screen to watch the videos would be intrusive to other families. The screen is too high for a younger child to comfortably reach and watch the videos on his/her own. The height is appropriate for older children and adults, but the kitchen is more popular, and supports longer engagements, with younger children. The videos were only available in English. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider moving the screen to an area with less overall traffic. Caregivers frequently sit at the Celebration Table as their kids explore independently. It would be easier for them to engage with the video content in that area. Adjust the height of the video screen so children under 7 can view it comfortably. Consider adding Spanish interpretation.

Appendix A: Remediation by Level, cont'd.

Level 3		
Area	Issue	Potential Remediation
Marketplace: Identifying Fruit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Including the fruit names proved beneficial to supporting cultural conversations. The labels of fruit names are not as prominently displayed as they could be, however. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider adding more prominent labels to the fruit to make them easier to notice.
Bamboo Bridge: Cultural Context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guests seem confused with the overall message that the bamboo bridge is part of Tết, most saw it as an everyday functional item. Some visitors walked away with the impression that Vietnam is less modernized than it is. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More could be done to explain the connection between the bridge and Tết. Adding backdrop photos of people using the bridge and adding more information could give more context to the bridge and make it more culturally immersive.
Lion Dance: Interpretation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Despite this being one of the most popular and memorable aspects of the exhibit, some visitors miss the related information. Additionally, the Lion was almost universally referred to as a “dragon.” Groups with some prior knowledge of Chinese New Year celebrations would ascribe the Lion to China or conflate Vietnam with China. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Place signage so it does not compete with the video and helps make the lion message come across more easily. Adding information that explains the relationship and differences between Chinese and Vietnamese lions could help ensure that visitors are more clear that this element is, in fact, Vietnamese.
Living Room: Dress-Up Clothing Availability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There were not enough child-sized clothes. Many of the children wore the clothes throughout their entire exhibit experience, leaving the dress-up space empty or filled with only adult-sized clothing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider adding more child-size clothing to the dress-up area.

Appendix A: Remediation by Level, cont'd.

Level 4		
Area	Issue	Potential Remediation
Zodiac Wheel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When used, this element was easy for visitors to connect with and discuss the Vietnamese Zodiac, but it was frequently ignored due to its location. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider alternative placement in the exhibit. Since visitors at Fireworks were curious about the zodiac symbols, it might help to place the Zodiac Wheel near it.
Lucky Money Tree	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Lucky Money Tree is a recognizable symbol of New Year's celebrations, but its current placement means visitors often pass by without noticing it. Another reason it might be easy to miss is the prevalence of other yellow, flowering, purely decorative trees in the exhibit. The Lucky Money Tree blends into the exhibit as decorative background. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider alternative placement. Display the interpretive label more prominently to differentiate this tree from the other plants in the exhibit.
Bầu Cua Cá Cọp	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A few caregivers expressed frustration that the rules of the game were not clear and should be featured more prominently. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider ways to make the rules of the game easier for visitors to see.

Appendix B: Guiding Questions

February 15, 2015

Primary Audience

Engagement/Social Interaction

1. To what extent and in what ways are families engaged in the overall experience in *Voyage to Vietnam*? How are children engaged? How are adults engaged? To what extent and in what ways do families play and learn together in the exhibition?
2. What specific areas of the exhibit seem to positively engage visitors? Are there areas that do not engage visitors positively and why? What is not working as well?
3. How do families use and respond to the trilingual signage in the exhibition?
4. To what extent do caregivers perceive that the exhibition was appropriate for their child(ren)'s age(s)?

Awareness/Understanding/Interest

1. To what extent and in what ways did the exhibition build visitors' awareness of Vietnam/Vietnamese traditions, customs, and values (e.g., holiday traditions, music, food, games, language)?
2. To what extent and in what ways does the exhibition foster connections and spur families to think about similarities and differences between themselves and children/families in Vietnam?

3. To what extent and in what ways, if any, did exhibition pique families' interest in Vietnam/ Vietnamese culture?
4. What ideas/messages overall do families take away from the areas of the exhibition? To what extent do these match the intended ideas/messages?

Value

1. To what extent and in what ways do parents value the exhibition for their child(ren)?

Satisfaction & Enjoyment

1. Do families report they enjoyed the exhibition? To what extent and in what ways are families satisfied with their experience in *Voyage to Vietnam*?
2. What aspects of the exhibition most contributed to families' enjoyment & satisfaction? Were there elements of the exhibit detracted from the experience in a significance way (i.e., what is not working)?

Secondary Audience

1. Overall, how do Vietnamese families respond to the exhibition in general? What is their level of satisfaction? What works and what doesn't work as well?
2. To what extent do Vietnamese parents feel the exhibition provides a familiar and accurate presentation of things that are important to them about their homeland/ culture? How do they connect to it?
3. To what extent and in what ways do parent value the exhibition for themselves and their children?

Appendix C: Exhibition Areas

Below are descriptions of the main exhibition areas/components from *Voyage to Vietnam Report #2, Working Design Package* (7/25/14).

New Year's Gateway



The entry arch is a large structure positioned at the entrance of the exhibition modelled after the beautiful structures constructed throughout cities in Vietnam for the celebration of Tết. The colorful arch provides the gateway to the exhibition and an introduction to where the country is located and the celebration of Tết.

Map of Vietnam: Provides the opportunity for families to see where Vietnam fits in the context of the world and to bring attention to its unique geographical shape.

Zodiac Wheel: Located in the archway to the exhibit, allows families to find which animal of the zodiac is featured in the current year and to identify (if they don't already know) which animal in the zodiac represents the year that they were born. Characteristics of people born in the different animal years are featured as well.

Marketplace



Photo backdrops of marketplaces in Vietnam set the stage for playful commerce. Children are able to 'purchase' and take to the exhibit's kitchen area items including red carp in large silver bowls and an array of traditional Vietnamese fruit.

A *Vespa Scooter* is available for children to experience the mode of transportation that is ubiquitous in Vietnam. Mounted on the back of the motor scooter is a large kumquat tree in a clay pot, ready to be transported to the front yard of the home, a special tradition during Tết. The scooter is a great photo opportunity for families.

A *Café* is featured with seating areas, menus, and Vietnamese currency to engage families in what it would be like to partake in one of Vietnam's tea shops.

The Fruit Stand allows children the opportunity to pretend play with items common to a Vietnamese fruit market, and signage provides context as to what those fruit and other food items are for the families to learn about.

Interactive Map



A touchscreen style coffee table allows for much greater in-depth exploration of Vietnam including photographs of different areas in Vietnam, style of clothing typical of those areas, climate and geographical features of the northern, central and southern regions of Vietnam. Families can gather around the interactive table and have discussions about Vietnam and Vietnamese life.

Appendix C: Exhibition Areas, cont'd.

Kitchen



Sharing Memories: A video monitor is mounted in the top of a pantry-style cupboard in the kitchen showcases different people sharing their favorite memories of Tết. Video footage of people of different ages was gathered already in Vietnam and Vietnamese Americans also share their memories.

Indoor Cooktop: Children can experience the many preparations that occur in the kitchen during Tết. Children pretend to make the special foods and clean the house with brooms purchased in Vietnam. Children can decorate the house with flowers and set the table to serve their families foods they have made.

Sweep Away: The brooms purchased in Vietnam, also offer context as to the tradition of sweeping away bad luck during the Tết festival. Families can learn more about Vietnamese traditions through this activity.

Living Room



Dress-Up: A wardrobe in the living room has an assortment of sizes of áo dài for girls and boys and adults to try on. A mirror helps them to see what they look like and a display of dolls show different áo dài styles from Northern, Central and Southern Vietnam.

Family Photos: As they are dressing up in áo dài, visitors can take digital family photos at a kiosk that will post their pictures in digital frames on the family photo wall in the living room of the home. The photos will stay on the wall for a few minutes until other visitors take their pictures at the kiosk. Digital photos will appear amongst other family photos featuring modern day Vietnamese families in Vietnam, wearing modern clothing and áo dài.

Ancestor Altar: Children are introduced to a traditional altar with a rich assortment of offerings in honor of family members or Tết. Children can sit in front of the altar on a plank bed with their families to sample some pretend tea.

Courtyard Area



Fireworks Activity: An interactive media experience allows children to do some simple programming to create fireworks which are then displayed on an LED screen mounted at the ceiling of the space or on a large computer monitor.

Outside Cooktop: Located in the backyard area of the house environment is a typical Vietnamese outdoor cooktop. On the top of the structure are two authentic Vietnamese clay wood-burning stoves. Permanently fixed to the wood stoves are cook pots where the visitors pretend to cook several Vietnamese dishes. Located in the center of the counter is a third cooking stove. The third cook top is permanently mounted over a small, faux charcoal bed.

Rice Cake Puzzle: A large interactive puzzle allows families to align different pictures together that create different photos. These photos all pertain to the art of making rice cakes, which is a traditional dish, also commonly used during Tết.

Appendix C: Exhibition Areas, cont'd.

Bamboo Bridge



Children test their balance and practice their large motor skills as they try to walk the bamboo bridge, a competition often engaged in during Tết. A backdrop nearby provides context as to what it might look like to cross a bamboo bridge in Vietnam. Baskets also are added as an extra element for further balancing difficulty to walk across the bridge for children to test out.

Music Pavilion



Visitors engage in music making through touch activated sounds of instruments played in Southern Vietnam, the interactive instruments are situated around a table so that multiple groups can participate in creating harmonious music together. Authentic Vietnamese instruments are featured in display cases so that visitors can see the actual instruments that have generated the sounds.

Lucky Money Tree



Located near the Vietnamese House, this exhibit element teaches families about “li xi” (Southernly called) or “tien mung tuoi” (Northernly called)- or lucky money, a traditional custom which is very popular not only in Vietnam but also in other Asian societies. Here families can learn about this Tết tradition and interact with the red envelopes and orange trees commonly used during the festival.

Appendix C: Exhibition Areas, cont'd.

Lion Dance



Children duck down low, fitting the Lion head over their own head, and becoming the lion featured in the Lion Dance, found in parades and Tết presentations. Children dance for family members and friends. A video monitor features a variety of Lion Dances on the streets of Saigon and in rural neighborhoods so that visitors who have not seen a Lion Dance before will know what it looks like. There is also a gong nearby that children can play to make music for the Lion Dance.

Bầu Cua Cá Cọp



This dice and board game popular in Vietnam during Tết has been transformed into a full body experience. The dice are large and require both hands to use which is dropped into a center console. On the ground are featured large graphic interpretations of each board game character. Bầu Cua Cá Cọp is played by rolling dice and matching colors and animals.

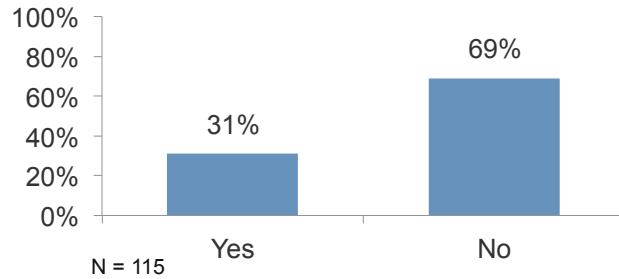
Water Puppets



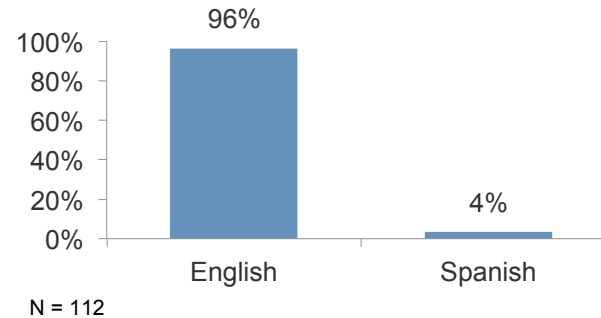
Simulating this art form found only in Vietnam, children create their own puppet shows for parents using puppets that 'walk on water.' A bench in front of the puppet theater encourages parents to watch their children's shows, and books housed in the bench encourage children to enact different traditional Vietnamese folktales. In display cases on the stage are traditional water puppets, that families can discuss.

Appendix D: Exit Survey Respondent Profile

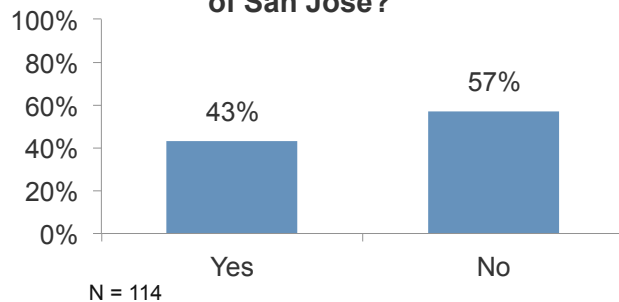
Is this your family's first visit to the Children's Discovery Museum of San Jose?



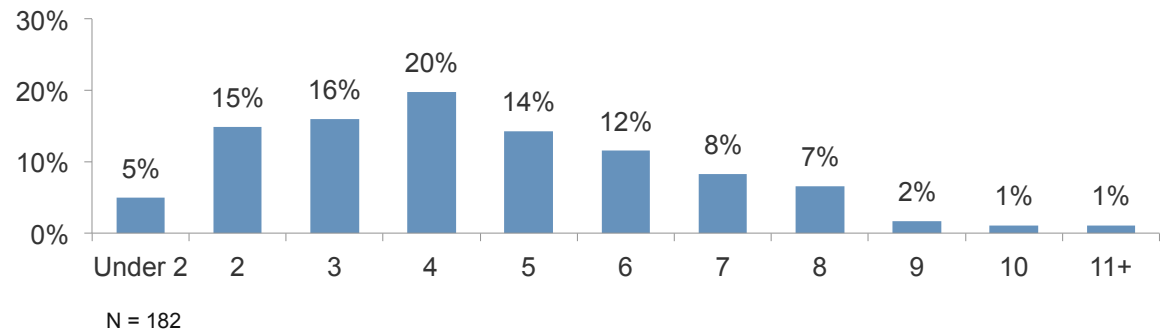
Language Survey Conducted in



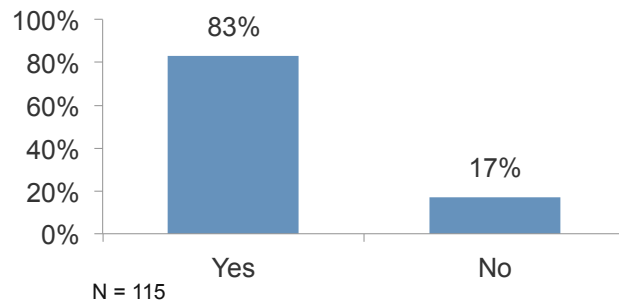
Are you a member of the Children's Discovery Museum of San Jose?



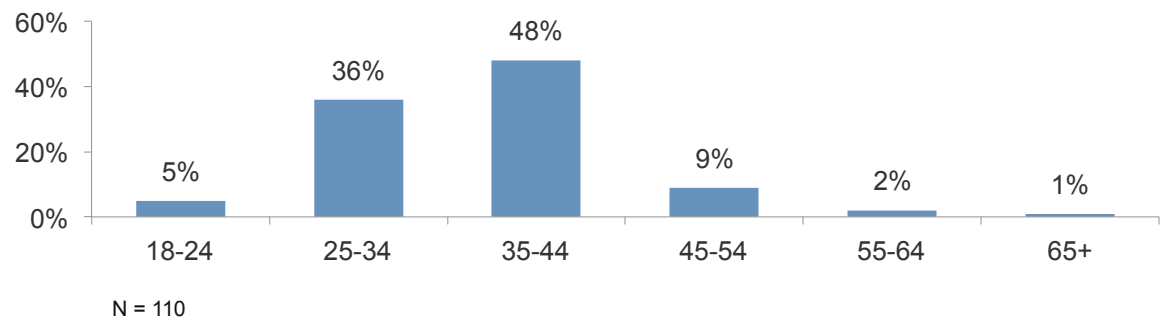
What are the ages of the children with you today?



Is this your family's first visit to the exhibit?

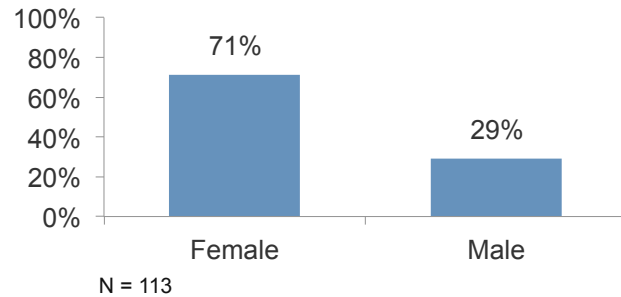


Respondent Age



Appendix D: Exit Survey Respondent Profile, cont'd.

Respondent Gender



Residence

Area	% of families (N = 133)
City of San Jose	39%
California (Outside San Jose)	59%
Out of State	2%

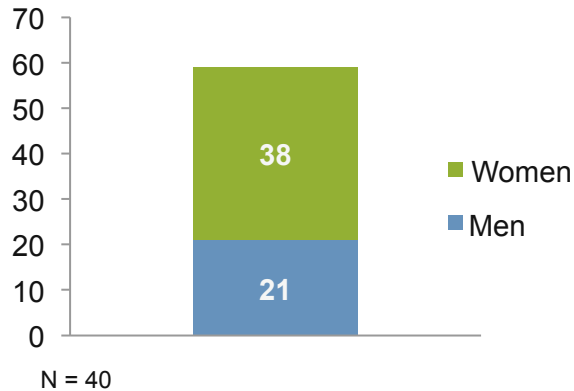
Respondent Race/Ethnicity
(could choose more than one)

Race/Ethnicity	% (N = 113)
African American	0%
Asian/Pacific Islander	49%
Caucasian	40%
Hispanic/Latino	17%
Native American	0%
Other*	2%

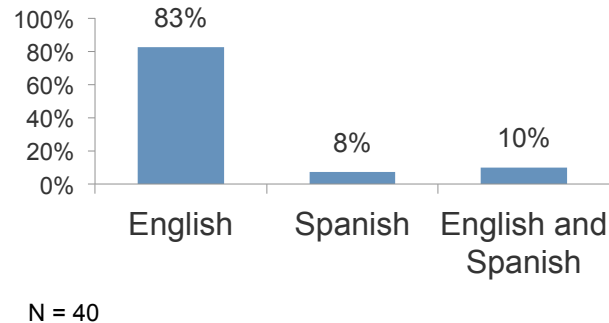
* "Other" includes Ukrainian and North African

Appendix E: Observation & Interview Respondent Profile

Number of Adults by Gender



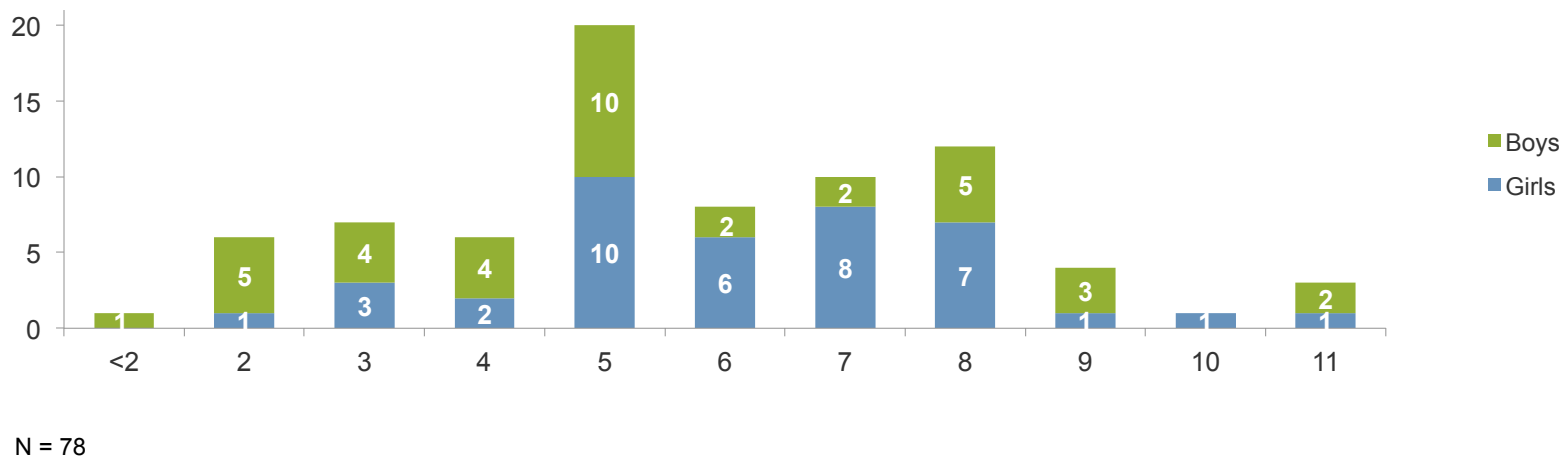
Language of the Observation and Interview



Residence

Area	% of families (N = 38)
City of San Jose	45%
California (Outside San Jose)	55%
Out of State	0%

What are the ages of the children with you today?



Appendix F: Engagement by Area

Below we discuss each area of *Voyage to Vietnam* in depth provided as part of the remedial evaluation focus.

New Year's Gateway

The visual appeal of the archway helped put visitors in an appropriate frame of mind for an exhibit about Vietnam. The exhibit had many eye-catching areas, however, and visitors did not dwell at the Gateway for long. The scooter and the fruit stand immediately drew visitors into the exhibit. Visitors exiting the exhibit often used the Map and Zodiac wheel. Currently, however, visitors are missing out on crucial context from the Archway and Map that would establish a sense of place and cue them that the exhibit is about Tết.

Marketplace

Overall, this area generated interest and enthusiasm.

The Scooter successfully evoked city life in Vietnam. Groups often talked about what it would be like to navigate crowded streets on a Vespa such as this one. Children often enjoyed thinking about what it would be like to have multiple family members riding the scooter simultaneously.

The Marketplace was especially successful in engaging children under five. It was easy for visitors to draw on personal experiences as ways of connecting with Vietnamese culture in this area. In particular, the fruit-shopping experience in the market was engaging and provided points of conversation to help families compare and contrast things they ate, explore and learn about the various fruits, and even talk about where they might buy such items in San Jose.

The Café area was less successful due to the lack of physical props. Either the Café was ignored or families sat in the space momentarily and moved on. Toward the end of data collection, however, staff added dishes and cups and other props to the tables, and at this point we saw an increase in engagement. Children engaged in imaginative play; for example, children and caregivers took turns placing orders and bringing food to each other.

Interactive Map

The interactive map information was interesting to visitors and provided a good platform for conversations about Vietnam, although it required significant help from parents. The map also had significant usability issues. These included:

- In general, caregivers used the map to talk with their children about Vietnam's location, but nearly never integrated the side menu information into the conversation. In a sense, they were using the map as a visual, but did not access the interactive components to explore or learn about the deeper aspects of Vietnam.
- Visitors had a hard time understanding how their actions corresponded to changes on the map. Visitors might touch the screen and something might change on the map, but it was unclear to them how what they had just done had affected the map. For example, touching the map might bring up an overlay that highlighted specific regions of Vietnam, but no cues were present to help visitors figure out what information was being presented.
- The side menus included different kinds of content but had no discernible unifying theme between topics. Visitors had difficulty determining the levels of content and struggled to connect how the information in the panels related to the map.
- While the side menus had some interesting graphical aspects, the information that popped up was very text-heavy with lots of content. The panels did not always orient correctly. Older children and adults could figure out how to manipulate the panels, but commented that it was confusing or disorienting.
- Visitors did not understand that they needed to exit a pop-up information panel. Subsequently, as they continued to select other menu options, the pop-up panels layered atop of each other. Younger children tended to keep pressing the menu, which caused the tabletop to freeze up—which further frustrated visitors.
- This was the only exhibit element cited by some visitors as not age-appropriate. Caregivers felt it was not appropriate in terms of presentation, content, and usability. The height of the table and chairs signaled it was to be used by young children, but it required a high reading proficiency for a successful experience. More than one group suggested it would be more successful if mounted vertically on the wall.

Appendix F: Engagement by Area, cont'd.

Lucky Money Tree

This element was the least visited. Mostly visitors saw it as background because so many similar plants and trees are in the space; it's likely that some additional signage or a different placement could help.

Kitchen

The kitchen was one area that engaged groups successfully. Families explored the different cooking tools and utensils, preparing food to bring to their family members. Unlike the marketplace, however, it also appealed to older kids. Groups were also intrigued by the fact that a typical Vietnamese House has both an indoor and outdoor cooktop. This area also provided families with opportunities to think about their own homes and everyday lives.

The Sharing Memories videos were rarely watched. This may be due in part to location; the videos are in a high-traffic part of the kitchen where many other things compete for attention. In addition, heavy traffic means that groups cannot stand for long periods in order to watch. We noted that this is the only element that is not trilingual.

Courtyard Area

The elements in the courtyard were all individually successful exhibit features that provided distinct experiences.

Outdoor Cooktop

The concept of having a separate stove outside interested most visitors. Caregivers frequently read the labels and shared their learning with children as they played. While some children were frustrated that not all the pots at the outdoor cooktop were movable, they still had successful experiences playing with the food in that area. We observed high levels of imaginary play here.

Fireworks

While the Fireworks interactive was enjoyable, and we observed many successful interactions, we did notice usability issues. On the successful side, the fireworks interactive helped visitors pick up on the theme of Tết. Groups made comparisons to the Fourth of July and Chinese New Year. Quality social engagement took place between groups at this area because they could watch shows together in the Night Sky. Groups were curious about the use of Zodiac signs to label the different fireworks shows; more information could be provided. The usability issues were as follows:

- The "Send to the Night Sky" and "Preview" buttons were hard for visitors (including adults) to find. Many groups did not realize that the show prepared on the screen would appear on the large TV screen above them. Therefore the descriptor "Send to the Night Sky" did not initially make sense.
- The wait time between finishing a show and seeing it appear in the Night Sky frustrated visitors. Groups would countdown to a new show for upwards of two minutes as they waited for it to appear in the Night Sky.
- Some younger children initially struggled to figure out how to drag the fireworks elements into their show, but with adult help, were able to successfully select and edit the show timeline.

Rice Cake Puzzle

The Rice Cake Puzzle, an intuitive activity, made people curious about making rice cakes. As children assembled the puzzle, they tried to guess what was happening in the picture. After they assembled the photo, caregivers could read the label if they wanted to learn more. Many connected making rice cakes to events in their own lives.

Living Room

Overall, the Living Room components were among the least utilized. Groups often walked past this area while transitioning from one element to the next. This is likely due to the fact it is between some of the most popular elements: Lion Dance, the Kitchen, and Fireworks. This area, however, was especially rich in helping families engage and make comparisons to their families' own cultural traditions. The importance of family came through in this area.

While the Altar was used less frequently, it supported good conversations about Vietnamese culture. Many visitors had encountered altars like this before, but shared that they had not understood their significance. Some commented they had assumed these altars were religious and were intrigued to find they were about honoring family. Some also reflected on their own ways of honoring loved ones and expressed an appreciation for learning about this aspect of Vietnamese culture.

While the Plank Bed is a nice feature in terms of cultural accuracy and context, it was not often used.

The Family Photos area provided many opportunities for social engagement for families. Children were enthusiastic and excited about taking photos and seeing them appear in the frames on the wall. The interactive was very easy to use and children of all ages were able to figure out intuitively how to take photos. While few overt conversations directly connected this activity to Vietnamese culture, the interactive still seemed to contribute to an overall message that valuing family is an important dimension.

Appendix F: Engagement by Area, cont'd.

Children under 5 enjoyed wearing the traditional Vietnamese dress. Older children were less interested in trying on the clothes but were amused when their caregivers tried things on. The one minor issue with this area was that after putting on the traditional Vietnamese dress, younger children would frequently wear the outfits for the rest of their time in the exhibit. This led at times to a shortage of child-sized clothing. In general, the distribution of sizes and clothing types limited the number of children who could use this element.

Bầu Cua Cá Cọp

This extremely socially engaging part of the exhibit encouraged play both within and between groups. Older children enjoyed directing younger siblings and interpreting the game rules, while younger children enjoyed finding the correct colors and symbols on the floor and dropping the dice. A few caregivers expressed frustration that the rules of the game were not very clear and should be featured more prominently, but most enjoyed making up their own rules and using the board and dice in many different ways.

Bamboo Bridge

The Bamboo Bridge was a very popular part of the exhibit. While all children enjoyed this component, older kids, some of who drew on their experiences with gymnastics or other sports, were particularly engaged. Even caregivers and other adults enjoyed the challenge.

Children were especially amused to watch their parents attempt to balance on the bridge; they did so with varying degrees of success. Most conversations pertained to advice and encouragement on how to balance, but a few groups discussed Vietnamese culture. Caregivers compared the baskets to their reusable grocery bags or other ways that their families carry groceries. The one issue was that after using the Bamboo Bridge, some groups inferred that Vietnam is a very “primitive” country. Children remarked that the bridge felt “very old” or “ancient.” This element could be improved with more cultural context, such as large backdrop photos or other cues to indicate how Bamboo Bridges are a part of Tết celebrations.

Water Puppets

While this component attracted visitors, it was less intellectually engaging than other areas and sparked few cultural discussions. There was little support for culturally-specific storytelling; when books were used, they were treated as a separate activity rather than as prompts to tell Vietnamese stories.

Children enjoyed moving the puppets using the handles, but the restricted range of motion limited the ways that they could use the puppets and led to aggressive back-and-forth motion from younger children. That behavior often resulted in broken puppets and distracted kids from using the puppets to tell a story. Caregivers with strong facilitation skills could, however, encourage children to tell stories by asking questions. Of all the areas, Water Puppets will require the most significant remediation in order to be successful with visitors.

Music Pavilion

Overall, the Music Pavilion was a memorable and enjoyable aspect of the exhibit. Visitors were excited by the touch interactives and their ease of use. Upon realizing that the instruments were harmonically aligned, groups members often collaborated and “played” the various instruments simultaneously. Families from all cultural backgrounds were highly interested in the instruments and were able to draw comparisons to ones with which they were more familiar. For example, the moon Lute invited the most comparisons, with different groups describing it as a “Vietnamese banjo, violin, or sitar.”

Lion Dance

Lion Dance was very successful and highly engaging. Most visitors were familiar with Chinese Dragons or, less frequently, with Vietnamese Lions, but had never seen one up close or had the chance to operate one. Many groups marveled at the video of Lion Dance performances and expressed interest in seeing such a performance in person.

It was the most recognizable symbol of New Year's celebrations in Asia, but visitors almost universally referred to it as a “dragon” and also associated it very strongly with China. If visitors were aware that the exhibit was about Vietnam, they sometimes asked questions about shared traditions between China and Vietnam, but if not, the Lion contributed to the conflation of Chinese and Vietnamese culture.