

The organization that I have been conducting service with throughout the course of this semester is the Longwood Center for the Visual Arts, also known as the LCVA. The LCVA is “the only museum of its kind, scope, and size in the area, ...Prince Edward County” (*“About the LCVA”*, 2017) providing individuals with access to visual art exhibitions and their relevance to everyday life. Utilizing a 20,000-square-foot exhibition space, the LCVA has featured award-winning art collections in addition to the works of nationally known artists. The Longwood Center for the Visual Arts fills the needs of the community, providing an environment that “fosters creativity, intellectual curiosity and involvement in the visual arts through its exhibitions, educational programs, permanent collection, and volunteer and internship programs” (*“Mission and Values of the LCVA”*, 2015) This environment is important to the community because it allows individuals to interact with the arts in various ways, providing a means of expansion for an individuals’ cultural capital. This interaction with the arts takes many different forms, allowing individuals to not only interact with the arts but to also assist in expanding the ability of individuals within the community to interact with the arts through volunteer opportunities.

Working with the Longwood Center for the Visual Arts, I was able to volunteer during the *“Art to Your Heart’s Content”* workshop for local families in the Prince Edward County area. This Valentine’s Day themed workshop allowed families to visit the LCVA with their children and enjoy various themed crafts ranging from simple coloring sheets to more complex crafts such as Valentine’s Day cards and envelopes. In addition to these crafts, there were also activities scattered around the LCVA including face painting, a snack table, and a children’s book area. These varying crafts and activities allowed children of all ages and abilities to find enjoyment in this workshop. Stationed at a table where children could make Valentine’s Day envelopes for their Valentine’s Day cards they created at another table. Working alongside another volunteer, we were able to help numerous excited children throughout the duration of the workshop. The children that visited our craft table varied in almost every way both physically, such as age, gender,

and race, and non-physically, such as ability and personality. These differences could be categorized into several common experiences that I had with the children I came into contact with during this workshop. A common experience with children during this workshop was children that were assisted by their parents and required little to no help from myself or the other volunteer; we simply explained the craft and gave them all the necessary components to complete the craft. Another common experience with children during this workshop was with young children that required an increased amount of assistance as their parents socialized with other parents at the event. This second common experience was much more insightful in regards to the abilities and personalities of the children at the event. These different experiences, especially the ones in which I was better able to interact with the children, was particularly insightful in relation to class discussions in on cultural capital and gender socialization.

Cultural capital can be defined by Bourdieu and Passeron as “a type of capital related to education, style, appearance, and dress that promotes social mobility” (as cited in Korgen and Atkinson, 2018) and can drastically influence an individual's ability to succeed in their lives. Generally, an individual's cultural capital is Dependant upon their parents, as they often provide the basis of their children's cultural capital, allowing them to interact with the arts in a hands-on approach. At this workshop, parents were able to increase the basis of their children's cultural capital, providing an educational experience that can also increase their social intelligence. Social intelligence is defined by Korgen and Atkinson as an individual's “ability to understand social relationships and get along with others” (Korgen and Atkinson, 2018). Allowing their children to interact directly with other children their age, in addition to adults that they might be unfamiliar with, children can learn how to interact interdependently with other individuals, both children their age and adults.

Gender socialization can be defined as “the process by which we learn to be a man or a woman in our particular place and time” (Korgen and Atkinson, 2018) and takes

place over an individual's lifetime, often directly influencing their preferred gender. Volunteering with numerous children at the LCVA's "Art to Your Heart's Content" workshop, I noticed a disproportionate amount of young girls attending the workshop. Reflecting on this observation, I have realized that this is a direct example of gender socialization, teaching young girls that they are more likely to be artistically inclined and that they should nurture this inclination. This lesson taught to young girls is also a direct example of gender scripts, defined as "expectations for behavior appropriate for our assigned genders" (Korgen and Atkinson, 2018). These lessons further teach young girls that they should nurture these inclinations and follow their gender script. In cases where young girls may not follow this gender script, consequences are sure to closely follow. These consequences are likely to lead a young girl to follow this gender script, even if she does not want to. Inversely, this also affects young boys in the case that they may be equally, if not more, interested in the arts and artistically inclined. However, young boys are equally subject to the consequences of acting against their gender script; their gender script being that they should be more intellectually inclined as opposed to artistically inclined. This is why, in my opinion, events such as the LCVA's workshops are so important.

As an artistically inclined individual myself, I deeply understand the frustration and fear associated with acting against a gender script as a young child interested in the arts. This is why I feel that these workshops and my assistance during these workshops is so important. While I believe nurturing this artistic inclination is equally important in any individual, I am especially sympathetic of young boys who may want to nurture this inclination. As I continue to volunteer with the Longwood Center for the Visual Arts in their future workshops, I hope that I will be able to do just that, even simply changing the future of one child.

## Bibliography

About the LCVA. (2017, July 26). Retrieved March 22, 2019, from <http://lcva.longwood.edu/about>

Korgen, K. O., & Atkinson, M. P. (2018). *Sociology in action*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

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