

Laura Weiss

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Recent Federally-Funded Research and Evaluation Activities

Building Supports Towards a Useful, Usable, and In-Use Framework of Professional Competencies in the Informal STEM Learning Field

(NSF - DRL - AISL #2215274, Association of Science-Technology Centers)

- Role: Senior personnel on the project team

Visitor Experience Preferences and the Whole Visit: Making Meaning across Systems of Experiences

(IMLS National Leadership Grant #MG-251610-OMS-22, COSI)

- Role: Senior research personnel

WaterMarks: An art/science framework for community-engaged learning around water and water management in an urban area

(NSF - DRL - AISL # 2115637, University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee)

- Role: Senior personnel on the project evaluation team

Snow: Museum exhibit, educational outreach, and learning research

(NSF - DRL - AISL #1810778, University of Alaska Fairbanks)

- Role: Senior Personnel on the project research team

Education

2015	MA	Museum Studies	Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis
2013	BA	History	University of Illinois Springfield

Work History

Feb 2021 – Present	Researcher	COSI's Center for Research and Evaluation
Jan 2018 – March 2020	Evaluation Specialist	Detroit Zoological Society
June 2015 – Jan 2018	Audience Research Associate	Philadelphia Museum of Art
Aug 2014 – May 2015	Allen Whitehill Clowes Museum Fellow	Indianapolis Zoo
May 2014 – Aug 2014	Research & Evaluation Intern	The Children's Museum of Indianapolis
Oct 2013 – Aug 2014	Gallery Facilitator	The Children's Museum of Indianapolis
June 2013 – Aug 2013	Learning Experiences Intern	Naper Settlement
Sept 2010 – May 2013	Access Services Student Assistant	Brookens Library
Sept 2012 – Dec 2012	Oral History Intern	Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum
May 2012 - Aug 2012	Museum Intern	DuPage County Historical Museum

Publications

- Borner, K., **Weiss, L.**, & Record, E. (2025). The xMacroScope – Open source technology for museums. *Informal Learning Review*.
- Hayde, D., **Weiss, L.**, & Meyer, J.R. (2025). Case Study 7. Visitor Preferences, Meaning-making and the Whole-visit Experience. In Davidson, L., *The Visitor Studies Guide: Theory and Practice for Heritage Contexts* (pp. 157-169). Routledge.
- Hayde, D., **Weiss, L.**, & Meyer, J. R. (2025). The role of visitor studies in shaping visitor-centered museums. *Curator: The Museum Journal*, 68(2), 337-355.
- Heimlich, J.E., **Weiss, L.**, Cason, J. & Owens, W. (2024). Using embedded assessment to evaluate science center theatre. *Visitor Studies*, 1-16. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/10645578.2024.2343583>
- Hayde, D., Heimlich, J.E., **Weiss, L.** (2023). Learningscapes and the visitor experience. In Wood, E. (Ed.), *A new role for museum education: Purpose, approach, and mindset*. Routledge.
- Meyer, J., **Weiss, L.**, Hayde, D., Longmeier, M.M., Cai, M., and Gopalakrishnan, S. (2022). How interdisciplinary collaboration helps communicate engineering research to community audiences. In *American Society for Engineering Education Annual Conference Community Engagement Division Proceedings*, American Society for Engineering Education.
- Wood, E., Zemanek, A., **Weiss, L.**, & Carron, C. (2016). Growing FLORES for the museum. *Collections: A Journal for Museum and Archives Professionals*, 12(1), 7-21. <https://doi.org/10.1177/155019061601200102>

Presentations

- Hayde., D., **Weiss, L.**, Riedinger, K., Ballard, M. (2025, July 9). *ISL Professional Pathways: Tools for Building STEM Learning Expertise*. [Poster presentation]. Visitor Studies Association annual conference, virtual.
- Hayde, D., **Weiss, L.**, Israel, E., & Meyer, J.R. (2025, May 7-9). *Studying whole visits with the visitor experience preferences toolkit*. [Recorded conference presentation.] American Alliance of Museums annual conference. Los Angeles, CA.
- Hayde, D., **Weiss, L.**, & Breece, K. (2024, August 2). *What was I made for? Visitor experience preferences as a tool for playing nicely with the real world*. [Live conference presentation.] Association of Midwest Museums annual conference. Columbus, OH.
- Weiss, L.** & Heimlich, J.E. (2024, August 1). *Getting visitors in the door: Perceptions and expectations as related to visitation of informal STEM learning institutions*. Association of Midwest Museums annual conference. Columbus, OH.
- Weiss, L.** & Hayde, D. (2024, July 31). *Creative Problem-Solving in Visitor Studies Methods*. [Professional learning workshop]. Association of Midwest Museums annual conference. Columbus, OH.
- Hayde, D., **Weiss, L.**, Israel, E., & Higgins, J. (2024, July 18). *Visitor experience preferences and the whole visit: An emerging toolkit*. [Live conference presentation.] Visitor Studies Association annual meeting. St. Paul, MN.
- Hayde, D., Riedinger, K., Ballard, M., **Weiss, L.**, Heimlich, J.E. (2024, July 17). *Building supports: (Re)introducing the informal STEM learning professional competency framework*. [Poster presentation]. Visitor Studies Association annual meeting. St. Paul, MN.

Heimlich, J.E. & **Weiss, L.** (2024, July 17). *Building validated scales for perception and expectation of ISL institutions*. [Poster presentation]. Visitor Studies Association annual meeting. St. Paul, MN.

Weiss, L. & Hayde, D. (2024, July 17). *What Tastes Like Home? Making meaning with botanic garden visitors*. [Poster presentation]. Visitor Studies Association annual meeting. St. Paul, MN.

Sparkman, A., **Weiss, L.**, & Hayde, D. (2023, July 13). Making Messages Stick: Data-Driven Interpretive Planning, a Team Effort. [Poster presentation]. Visitor Studies Association annual conference, virtual.

Wasserman, D.L., **Weiss, L.**, & Hayde, D. (2023, July 13). Dread on Arrival: Measuring entrance narrative to predict learning. [Poster presentation]. Visitor Studies Association annual conference, virtual.

Benson, M., Wasserman, D.L., Venables, M., & **Weiss, L.** (2023, July 13). Voices & Choices: A Soft-Systems Design Form [Hosted presentation]. Visitor Studies Association annual conference, virtual.

Hayde, D., & **Weiss, L.** (2023, July 12). Creative Problem Solving in Visitor Studies Methods. [Live conference presentation]. Visitor Studies Association annual conference, virtual.

Hayde, D., Heimlich, J.E., & **Weiss, L.** (2023, July 11). Embedded Measures as a Strategy for Context-Friendly, Inclusive Studies. [Live conference presentation]. Visitor Studies Association annual conference, virtual.

Hayde, D., Meyer, J.R., & **Weiss, L.** (2023, April 1). *Science in Community: Context-sensitive Evaluation and the WaterMarks Project*. [Live conference presentation]. Society for Applied Anthropology annual meeting, Cincinnati, OH.

Weiss, L., Hayde, D., & Wasserman, D.L. (2023, March 30). *CRaTE: Validated Questionnaires to Measure Participants' Cultural Relationships & Topical Exploration*. [Poster presentation]. Society for Applied Anthropology annual meeting, Cincinnati, OH.

Heimlich, J.E., & **Weiss, L.** (2022, October 13). *Evaluating Impact in EE: Learning from Five Years of ee360*. [Traditional presentation]. North American Association for Environmental Education Conference and Research Symposium, Tucson, AZ.

Weiss, L., Wasserman, D.L., & Hayde, D. (2022, October 11). *CRaTE: Validated Questionnaires to Measure Participants' Cultural Relationships & Topical Exploration*. [Poster presentation]. North American Association for Environmental Education Conference and Research Symposium, Tucson, AZ.

Weiss, L., Heimlich, J.E., Kemper, R.F., McCandless, A., Cason, J., Pollock, B., & Brack, J. (2022, September 13). *Beyond the Whiz-Bang: Embedding Evaluation Into Science Shows*. [Poster presentation]. Association of Science and Technology Centers annual conference, Pittsburgh, PA.

Weiss, L. & Hayde, D. (2022, July 12-14). *Communicating animal excellence at the Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden*. [Poster presentation]. Visitor Studies Association Conference, Omaha, NE.

Weiss, L., Wasserman, D.L., Popson, C. (2022, July 12-14). *Introducing ISEE: The informal STEM education evaluation system*. [Poster presentation]. Visitor Studies Association Conference, Omaha, NE.

Weiss, L. & Hayde, D. (2022, July 12-14). *Unpacking the CRaTE: Measuring visitors' cultural relationships and topical exploration*. [Hosted presentation]. Visitor Studies Association Conference, Omaha, NE.

Weiss, L., Meyer, J.R., Hayde, D., Kemper, R.F., O'Brien, K., Brenner, C., & Gopalakrishnan, S. (2022, May 19-22). *Don't stop the party! When social experience and evaluation converge*. [Poster presentation]. American Alliance of Museums 2022 Annual Meeting & MuseumExpo, Boston, MA.

Heimlich, J.E., **Weiss, L.**, & Kemper, R. (2021, October 15). *What Emerging Leaders in EE Need to Lead* [Traditional presentation]. North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE) Annual Conference. Virtual.

Heimlich, J.E., Kemper, R., & **Weiss, L.** (2021, October 7). *Exploring Pathways Through the Field of Environmental Education*. [Traditional presentation]. North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE) Research Symposium. Virtual.

Hayde, D., O'Brien, K., Brenner, C., & **Weiss, L.** (2021, July 13-15). *Don't stop the party! When social experience and evaluation converge*. [Poster presentation]. Visitor Studies Association Conference, Virtual.

Hayde, D. & **Weiss, L.** (2021, July 13-15). *Of myths and Muppets: Thinking differently with traveling exhibitions*. [Poster presentation]. Visitor Studies Association Conference, Virtual.

Weiss, L. (2019, July 10-13). *Emoji evaluation: Measuring youth's feelings towards nature*. [Poster presentation]. Visitor Studies Association Conference, Detroit, MI.

Bolander, E., Tracey-Miller, C., & **Weiss, L.** (2017, July 18-22). *Leaving the temple on a hill: Evaluating art museum community engagement*. [Panel presentation]. Visitor Studies Association Conference, Columbus, OH.

Wood, E., **Weiss, L.**, & Zemanek, A. (2015, July 14-18). *Fine-tuning a family learning object rating system*. [Paper presentation]. Visitor Studies Association Conference, Indianapolis, IN.

Musun-Miller, A. & **Weiss, L.** (2015, July 14-18). *Primates watching primates: Evaluating guests' orangutan exhibit experience*. [Poster presentation]. Visitor Studies Association Conference, Indianapolis, IN.

Weiss, L., Reifler, D., & Musun-Miller, A. (2015, July 14-18). *How orangutans started an evaluation program at the Indianapolis Zoo*. [Panel presentation]. Visitor Studies Association Conference, Indianapolis, IN.

Izzo, E., Quay, E., & **Weiss, L.** (2014, September 21-22). *Why is this here?: The family learning potential of a museum collection*. [Poster presentation]. Association of Indiana Museums, Indianapolis, IN.

Izzo, E., Quay, E., & **Weiss, L.** (2014, July 15-19). *Why is this here?: The family learning potential of a museum collection*. [Poster presentation]. Visitor Studies Association Conference, Albuquerque, NM.

Izzo, E., Quay, E., & **Weiss, L.** (2014, April 23). *Why is this here?: The family learning potential of a museum collection*. [Poster presentation]. IUPUI Robert G. Bringle Civic Engagement Showcase and Symposium, Indianapolis, IN.

Weiss, L. (2013, April 12). *War widows and black bombazine: Mourning dress in the American Civil War*. [Paper presentation]. StARS – Student Arts & Research Symposium, Springfield, IL.

Awards and Honors

2014 –2015	Second Year Graduate-Level Academic Excellence Fellowship	Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis
2013	First Place Scholarship in the Humanities	StARS – Student Arts & Research Symposium