

MUSEUM EDUCATION OUTLINE

Condensed version for public portfolio

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Mission Statement for Archival & Museum Educational Initiatives

We aim to be a resource for students, teachers, and all members of our community who are interested in history. Our goal is to make history accessible, inspiring, and relevant through varied educational initiatives.

Educational Values

Our educational initiatives revolve around four core values. We rely upon these values to guide our efforts to help our community learn about local history.

- *Increasing Access:* By digitizing our collections and staying abreast of trends in digital humanities, we aim to facilitate easy, free access to our resources.
- *Breaking Boundaries:* By employing interdisciplinary themes in our programming, we aim to demonstrate how history connects to many disciplines, such as mental health, urban planning, the arts, and economics.
- *Developing Collections:* By strengthening our archival and oral history collections, we aim to foster education by applying professional archival standards to the care and preservation of primary sources related to local history.
- *Invigorating Education:* By serving as a communal learning space, we aim to foster projects and partnerships that support formal and informal education for our patrons.
- *Evaluating Performance:* By assessing our initiatives and collecting feedback from our visitors, we aim to maintain high levels of effectiveness for all our educational initiatives.

Educational Initiatives

- *Writer-in-Residence Program:* Our Writer-in-Residence Program is a partnership with [funding institution]. It provides resources for individuals who are conducting research using sources at our institution.
- *Middle and High School Tours:* Our institution partners with [local school district] to bring students to our institution to tour our exhibits. During their docent-led tours, students do activities that complement their history curriculum requirements.
- *Docent Internship Program:* Our institution partners with local high schools and universities to provide internships to individuals who are interested in working in a museum setting and who enjoy communicating with diverse groups of people. This is a great opportunity for people who want to polish their public speaking skills, meet community members, and learn about local history.
- *Preservation Internship Program:* Our institution partners with local high schools and universities to provide internships to individuals who are interested in working in preservation laboratory.
- *Student Teacher Curriculum Development Projects:* Our institution partners with [local university's] Education Program to provide teachers in training an opportunity to use our exhibits and archival materials to create learning materials for their portfolios. Through this partnership, these young educators have the chance to use their creativity to make history-centered curriculum materials.
- *Undergraduate Archival Research Projects:* Undergraduates taking history courses local universities will use our exhibits to write informative essays based on primary source material. Our staff members host workshops for the students that teach them the basics of archival research. At the end of the semester, students give presentations on their work.
- *Teacher Workshops:* Our institution will host teacher-oriented workshops for local K-12 social studies and history teachers. In addition to offering an opportunity for networking and sharing ideas amongst educators, these workshops aim to demonstrate how to incorporate the themes and materials at our institution into their classes. We also want to gain feedback from teachers about how we can better serve their needs through our programming.

Audience Learning Chart

Audience	Characteristics	Needs
Pre-K Children	Joyful, eager to please and learn. Short attention spans.	Need lots of open space to run and explore. They need interactive exhibits that they can touch. Bright exhibits with easy-to-read text and short videos are better for them.
K-5 Grade Students	Full of energy. Loud and boisterous. Can be destructive. They enjoy interactive activities, but are also quickly bored if things don't interest them.	Everything must be age and reading level appropriate. Kids this age like souvenirs. They need lots of teacher supervision.
6-12 Grade Students	Difficult to impress & maintain interest. Longer attention span than younger students, but unless they are interested in subject matter, they will not pay attention unless their grades depend on it. Can ask great questions and make insightful connections when inclined.	Middle and high school students need fun, engaged docents that are not intimidated by teenage antics or rudeness.
College Students	Eager to explore high-level concepts and ask questions. Very focused attention spans.	College students require intelligent content that challenges and informs them. They need a very knowledgeable docent who can answer difficult questions, but who will also leave them alone to explore on their own when necessary.
General Adults	Similar to college students, but may come from many different educational backgrounds. They appreciate a welcoming, clean space.	They need the same intelligent content as college students. They are often more interested in gift shops, refreshments, and seating areas than college students.
Seniors	Often make assumptions, and may or may not be open to ideas that challenge those assumptions. They enjoy interacting with museum staff and discussing historical items/events that they personally remember.	Seniors need bright lighting, larger text, and plenty of ramps and accessible amenities. Exhibits should be easy for wheelchairs to maneuver. They need docents who are patient with moving at a slower pace.
Families (options: with small children, with teens, intergenerational, etc.)	Looking for an educational AND entertaining experience.	Families need space for seating and the same accessibility considerations as seniors for strollers, etc.

Strengths & Weaknesses of Interpretive Approaches

Interpretive Approach	Strengths	Weaknesses
People (Staff or Volunteers)	People offer the most flexibility and customized interaction with individual patrons & groups. People can give tours.	Because everyone is different, it can be difficult to establish one level of quality across all staff members. Some docents will simply be better interpreters than others. Because people are unpredictable, sick days, mood, and other factors will influence their effectiveness.
Exhibitions	Exhibits can give patrons a cohesive narrative that connects many themes from a given time period. They offer a combination of pictures, video, text, sound, and artifacts with which patrons can interact.	An institution may have limited space for exhibits. Permanent exhibits can become stale. Patrons may not get a chance to visit temporary exhibits before they end. Exhibits cannot be tailored for individual learning styles.
Computers, electronics, & mechanical devices	Hardware and software can be used to provide individualized learning experiences for patrons. Devices standardize the learning experience in a way that human docents can't because staff controls every detail of the information patrons will have. Patrons can move at their own pace.	The loss of the human element when in the museum space. Many people are attached to gadgets all day and would welcome the opportunity to be taught by a docent instead. Computers and tablets do malfunction. Is there IT staff on hand ready for repairs? Older patrons may not feel comfortable with the devices.
Publications	Printed materials provide an informative keepsake for visitors to read when they get home. They are great supplements to the information presented in the exhibit. A museum can have publications made for each exhibit, or have separate ones for children & adults.	Publications are time-consuming and can be expensive to print. Depending on the type of museum, publications may require frequent updating.