Targeting Programs
Teaching to Specific Audiences

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How can you expect to hit a target if you don't aim? The simple answer is that you can't. The same is true when developing and implementing educational programs. You must do more than assume you know a targeted audience. "Targeting by assumption" is no different than guessing. And, while your willingness to guess may serve as an indicator of good intentions, it is no way to create excellence in programming. (Remember the famous road that's paved with good intentions?)

Working to assess your audience is the best way to target a program, and a necessary route for determining programmatic validity. Assessing helps define both the needs and desires of the intended audience. And, assessment can reveal if the targeted program actually achieves its objectives.

Developing a Targeted Program
The first step when targeting programs is to learn as much as you can about the intended audience. You can't tailor programs to fit a specific population without sizing up that audience. This requires discerning what motivates the audience to come to your institution, determining what their learning needs are, ascertaining what level of ability and exposure they have, and being told what the audience hopes to do with the experience after they depart.

Take the time necessary to ask, explore, and gather information. Speak with representatives of that population and others who already work successfully with that audience. For instance, if you are developing programs for people who are visually impaired, visit organizations that work with that segment of the community, contact experts, and enlist the aid of people with visual impairments who will serve on an advisory panel. Allow these people and resources to help you understand the audience beyond your level of assumption. Be a good questioner and a good listener. Learn such things as how people with visual impairments gather information best, what obstacles they find when using facilities like your own, and what might make visits easier and more productive.

If developing programs for school groups, speak with curricular supervisors, other administrators and principals, teachers, and members of parent organizations. Find out what students in the grades targeted are responsible for learning and how your institutional collection might serve as a resource or complement. Find out how a visit to your institution will fit into the school year and how the information derived will be used once the students return to class. Enrichment is good, but relevance is essential. This is especially true during these days of increasingly finite resources and external pressures to devote more time to performance on standardized tests.

During the development stage of programming — when a program has been outlined and its goals and objectives defined, but before the methodology and details are finalized — return to the people and resources you consulted. Ask them to review your concept and ideas for its execution. Are you on target? Did you understand and properly process the information and advice you received? Be malleable and willing to make alterations.

Remember that this is not the only time evaluation and revision will be necessary. It is simply the first.

Scheduling the Targeted Program
Regardless of whether it is a staff member or volunteer who schedules tours, the strategic importance of that person cannot be overstated. The tour scheduler should know that the tour should do more than simply match time slots and dates with group requests. He or she should have a conversation with the "client" and solicit information about the desires and capabilities of the group.

Beyond dates, times, and numbers of people arriving, the scheduler should query whoever calls about a host of other concerns. Most should revolve around visitors' expectations and needs. In addition, the conversation that results should help to avoid misunderstandings by addressing any misconceptions the "client" may have about the program or its delivery.

For instance, among the questions a tour scheduler might ask are:

▲ Which institutional program is being requested, and why was that one chosen?
▲ Is this trip connected to other activities or areas of study?
▲ What has the group been told about the purpose and/or content of their visit?
▲ Are there special requests to accommodate?
▲ Do any members of the group have particular physical needs that will require attention or assistance?
▲ If the group consists of students or other people requiring supervision, have the requisite number of chaperones or attendants been secured?
Take Aim!

Conducting the Targeted Program

Just as every individual differs from others, every group has its own distinguishing characteristics. Even though one visiting group can be put into the same category as another, the two will not behave identically. It is not appropriate for instance to presume that all tourists are the same, or that every eighth grade group will react similarly to others. Groups have their own dynamic.

Because every group is different, docents should use part of their introductory time to assess each particular group they greet. "Welcome to our facility. Have you been here before? What did you see the other times? What were you hoping to see today?"

While you may have only a few moments to engage in such conversation, consider this time well spent. First, it makes an audience feel at ease to get acquainted with their docent. Second, conversation sets the stage for interactive teaching rather than passive listening. Third, this abbreviated conversation can avoid some important misunderstandings. If, for example, people were expecting to see giraffes and these animals are not on display, the group should be told. If the participants were expecting to see giraffes but they are not ordinarily on this tour program, the docent must make a rapid-fire decision. Can a visit to the giraffe exhibit be accomplished logistically, and can the lesson be adapted without losing its integrity?

After this quick assessment, tell visitors the theme or subject of the tour. This lets them know how to connect their experiences to a big idea and improves the potential for information retention.

Following Up on a Targeted Program

Several opportunities present themselves for assessing a targeted program after it has been implemented. At the conclusion of conducting targeted programs, docents should be asked about the program's workability and appropriateness. Their appraisal should speak to issues of teaching, modes of delivery, and logistical concerns.

Evaluations by the tour recipients will reveal what was learned and how much was retained. These evaluations should also tell reviewers such things as the audience's level of enjoyment and whether the program was considered worthwhile.

Feedback from supervisors or group leaders (such as teachers, principals or administrators) will tell the program developer if the program is achieving its goals and objectives. The program developer's willingness to listen, refine, and even rework if necessary, should go a long way toward ensuring that other cooperative projects will be undertaken in the future.

Alan Gartenhaus
Publishing Editor

The Docent Educator is a quarterly publication dedicated to improving the performance, status, and satisfaction of volunteer and staff educators teaching within museums, historic sites, gardens, parks, zoos, libraries, and classrooms. The publication is available by subscription to individuals, as well as to groups and institutions.

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Creative Solutions to

The director of education organized a meeting of education staff and certain docents involved with the training for ancient civilization tours to discuss the problem and develop a tour that would be appropriate for second grade students.

The two of us, one a museum educator and staff member and the other a docent and former teacher with a background in early childhood education, were included in this meeting. We looked at the many facets of the situation and examined both the possibilities and the limitations we faced in designing a tour for young children focusing on Ancient Egypt and China.

Among our obvious limitations were the narrow scope of the museum's collection and the "intimate" size of our galleries. It was not realistic to squeeze a large group of children into two small spaces while trying to hold their attention for an hour. Also, since young children learn best by doing, hands-on activities should be an essential part of the educational process for children of this age.

We are not a touching museum, and visitors cannot handle the antique porcelain pieces in the Chinese gallery no matter how much they might learn in the process!

Eventually, we developed an Egypt-China tour for second graders that alternates gallery experiences with hands-on activities. Consistent with these children's limited attention spans, we divide tours into four fifteen-minute segments. When a group of children (usually two classes of second graders, or approximately sixty children) arrive at the museum, they are divided into four groups of approximately fifteen children each, with a docent assigned...
“Standards of Learning”

to each group. The four stops during the tour include the Egyptian gallery, the Chinese gallery, a workshop activity that focuses on Egypt, and a hands-on activity in a gallery setting that focuses on the Chinese influence upon porcelain.

Much of the collection in the Chinese gallery is comprised of Chinese porcelains. But, we also have two very large galleries of English porcelain that are seldom used. Making a static display of porcelain exciting to second graders can be a daunting prospect, however. Since we had several inexpensive pieces of imitation export Chinese porcelain left over from a previous exhibition, we decided to use them to allow children a tactile opportunity. Children get to feel and closely observe the different glazes and motifs originally developed by the Chinese in ancient times and later adapted by Europeans.

Docents begin this portion of the program by reminding students of all the contributions that the Chinese people have made throughout history. This leads to a discussion of porcelain and the European attempts to discover how the Chinese made it. Students are intrigued at the thought of a “secret recipe” for porcelain. Through conversation and inquiry, the students realize that they already know several of the ingredients used in that secret recipe, such as clay, water, heat, etc. This is an empowering experience for second graders!

Allowing them to touch reproductions — to feel the smoothness of the blue and white ware compared with the rough surface of a rose medallion piece — led the students to the conclusion that blue could be painted onto the piece before it was fired, but that the other colors had to be applied later. Once they learn how the designs were applied, they explore the galleries to find examples of Chinese designs that were copied by the English.

So what was once a quiet, little-used gallery has suddenly become an exciting, dynamic place! The only problem we have found with this portion of the program is that new security officers and concerned members of the public have been known to react with horror when they see children touching what they perceive to be collection pieces. We are quick to assure them that these are reproductions, and once this fact is established, all who have observed the program are delighted by the reactions of the children.

The children also react with delight when they enter the workshop for their hieroglyph activity. While in the workshop, the children learn about Egyptian writing and papyrus by inscribing their names in Egyptian hieroglyphs on strips of papyrus, which they can take home and use as bookmarks.

While papyrus is not exactly a household item, we were easily able to locate a source on the internet. The papyrus comes in sheets that can be cut into strips. After being handed a strip, the children are able to make comparisons between papyrus and the paper they use in school everyday. Then they discuss the writing implements and substances used to make ink in ancient times, and they readily agree that the black markers we
supply for this activity produce the same results much more efficiently.

The children are introduced to hieroglyphs by means of a large display on a bulletin board. The letters of the Roman alphabet are posted, each with its corresponding Egyptian hieroglyph underneath. The children are instructed to write their names on one side of the papyrus strip the way they do in school. (We tell them that this will help their teachers, in case they have trouble reading hieroglyphs!) The children are then told to turn the papyrus over and practice writing their names in hieroglyphs on the other side by matching the letters in their names to the hieroglyph characters. This activity is quite popular, and some docents engage the children in a bit of play-acting, asking them to pretend that they have gone back in time 3,000 years to ancient Egypt where they are attending the Pharaoh’s school for young scribes.

When targeting programming for second graders, educators and docents alike need to remember to key tours and activities to the developmental level of this age group. During the second grade year, children are developing and changing rapidly. A child at the beginning of the school year is quite different from that same child at the end of the year. We found that the hieroglyph writing activity is more difficult for children who come for tours earlier in the school year than it is for those who tour later on. One clever docent came up with the idea of having children who have difficulty with this project only write their initials in hieroglyphs.

The reaction to this approach of alternating hands-on activities with gallery experiences for second graders has been enthusiastic. Teachers and children alike find the tour enjoyable, and the children leave the museum with a physical reminder of their visit (the papyrus bookmark). In the past year almost 4,800 second graders participated in this tour, and the teacher evaluations have been extremely positive.

Certainly we cannot produce the pyramids or the Great Wall of China to illustrate the architectural achievements of Ancient Egypt and China. We can, however, introduce these youngsters to some of the cultural artifacts in our collection and give them hands-on experiences that will teach them about the contributions each of these ancient societies made to world civilization.

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Betsy Browne has been a docent at the Chrysler Museum of Art for fourteen years. She received bachelor’s and master’s degrees in Early Childhood Education from the University of Maryland in College Park, MD. For a number of years she taught young children from preschool through the third grade. Ms. Browne’s first docent experience was at the National Museum in Bangkok, Thailand. Ms. Brown co-authored an article for The Docent Educator previously, which was titled, "3 Docents, 70 Years of Volunteer Experience" (Vol. 9, No. 3).
The Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation house museums have developed school programming designed to spark young children's interest in history. At Hay House, for instance, youngsters learn about the basic house structure from familiar fairy tales and games. Older children are involved in an elaborate program that illustrates family life and social customs of a particular period by inviting students to see the house as it would have been prepared for an elegant social event. High school students are invited to "behind-the-scenes" tours with insight into the design, structure, and systems of the home.

The McDaniel-Tichenor House in Monroe also hosts school tours, but a major part of their educational program involves making on-site visits to schools. Since some schools may not have the time or resources to take a field trip, the McDaniel-Tichenor House brings Georgia Trust Heritage Education programs to the classrooms. One of the planned programs is a "trunk show," a colorful plastic trunk that may be filled with a variety of items such as period costumes, photographs and artifacts relating to state, local, or house history, depending on the class curriculum.

The Georgia Trust's house museums have become popular destinations for adventurous teachers and students looking for an "active" approach to teaching and learning. By creating programming that appropriately targets school needs and curricula, visits to these sites offer tangible illustrations of history and help students see the past as more than just words on a textbook's page.

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It Works for Me ...
Sharing successful techniques, thoughts, and ideas.

During the past year, we adapted our Docent Council bylaws to relate
to current practices, initiated new docent categories including
Docent Emeritus (as we recently celebrated the Museum's tenth anniversary),
and for the first time asked docents to sign an annual agreement.
All of these changes were made following consultations with The Docent Educator,
a resource that explores many aspects of the docent experience.
While we had to adapt ideas to fit, the suggestions and ideas flowed
as soon as we read of the experiences and solutions other docent groups shared.
Thanks for creating the magazine. Enclosed are the fees for 14 group subscriptions.

Kit Kowalke, Vice Chair, Docent Council
The Contemporary Museum
Honolulu, Hawaii

The Docent Educator Autumn 2000
"T"he great man is he who does not lose his child’s heart.” (Mencius 327-289 B.C.) When children tour your museum, how do you speak to their hearts and minds? Do you ask questions? Provide activities? Promote exploration? Invite discussion? Do you use the same touring strategies when teaching adults? Most of us subscribe to the notion that children have a more enjoyable and educational museum experience if they actively participate in a tour. Yet we hesitate when it comes to applying the same techniques with adult audiences. Why do we think that interactive and personalized tours are beneficial for younger visitors but not appropriate for adults? What holds us back?

Perhaps one of the larger stumbling blocks is our pre-conceived idea of what adults do and don’t want. We assume that adults won’t want to be actively involved, and would rather linger in the background, passively taking in information. We may also believe that interactive tours for adults would be the same as children’s tours, only talking in a “more adult tone of voice.”

While it is true that the same general touring strategies work for all ages, there are ways to modify approaches to make them suitable and appropriate for adults. When designing tours for adult audiences, we need to reconsider what adults really want and what a successfully engaging tour for adults might look and sound like.

What do adults actually want from a museum experience? A study of adult museum programs, coordinated by the Museum of the Rockies in Bozeman, Montana, revealed that adult learners are more self-directed than children, bring a rich resource of backgrounds and experiences to learning situations, have internal incentives for learning, and want to apply what they are learning immediately. (Dr. Bonnie Sachatello-Sawyer and Dr. Robert Fellenz, Principal Investigators, A National Study of Adult Museum Programs, U.S. Department of Education Field Initiated Studies Program)

So, contrary to many of our assumptions, adults are looking for opportunities to make their own decisions, share what they think and feel, and actively learn and grow. Therefore, it seems appropriate that during adult tours, docents try to provide opportunities for choice, engagement, questioning, reflection, interaction, and wonder.

Choice

Do adults have a chance to make choices during your tours? Inviting adults to choose empowers them, helps them direct their learning experiences, gives them a personal investment in the lesson, and makes them more mindful of what they will be doing.

What are some practical ways to provide adults with choice? You could, quite simply, ask each person to select an object in a gallery that engages their interest, and base the discussion on those choices. Or, if time does not permit selecting multiple objects, ask participants to look at the same object, but let them choose the way in which they will investigate it. This can be accomplished by giving each person a card with three different “triggers” for thinking about the object.

For instance, a “trigger” card might ask the viewer to select one from the following three activities:

- think of five words to use to best describe this object
- make an association between this object and something in your own life
- compare this object to other objects on display in this area.

After distributing the cards, give the group some silent time for thinking. Then, ask those who wish to participate in the first activity to share their thoughts. Next, move on to the second activity, and then, the third. In addition to gaining their direct participation, you will have engaged everyone in all three activities.

Engagement

In his book The Everyday Work of Art, Eric Booth points out that a work of art (or a history or science object) “has two concurrent lives: one as an actual real thing and another in the set of connections we make when we engage with it.” Getting your visitors to engage with objects, therefore, implies having them connect with them in personal and meaningful ways that go beyond objective lectures.

The desire to touch, to try new things, and to be entertained doesn’t disappear when one becomes an adult. Look for creative ways to invite your adult audiences to participate. In an art museum you might have a group pass around a piece of canvas covered in oil paint, let them handle a copper engraving plate, or have them try their hand at making a
simple design on a scratchboard.
In a science museum you could set up a hands-on activity or experiment.
And, in a history museum you could play music from an earlier period,
or share news stories from the time represented by the object or place you are exploring.

Do not stand between the object and the visitor. Stand to the side or behind the group so that your audience's focus is on the object and not you. Everything you do to directly involve adults with the objects they are encountering will further their engagement.

Questioning
If you've tried posing questions during adult tours, you may have encountered the long silence that often follows as you wait for an answer. I encourage you not to fear the silence. Eventually, someone in the group will be brave enough to speak up, especially if you ask questions that do not require prior knowledge or expertise to answer, such as “What do you have in your home that this object might remind you of?”

Encourage adults to ask their own questions. Have each person in a group select a different object and list all the questions they can generate about that one piece. Then, discuss the questions listed and provide some answers.

Give adults permission to ask questions. Let them know that all questions are welcome and none are too simple. Also, try posing some rhetorical questions, such as “Have you looked at plants like this and wondered why they evolved this way?” People will be responding, silently, in their minds.

Interaction
Interaction can be achieved effortlessly just by asking visitors such questions as “Does anyone see it differently?” or “Does anybody remember having one of these?” Allowing your audience to make choices, to engage, and to consider questions promotes interaction. And, interaction makes learning experiences more memorable and more enjoyable.

Reflection
The “flip side” of interaction is reflection. Do you give visitors time to think? This is particularly important because people learn and participate in different ways. Some will be quick to respond; others will need time to formulate answers or opinions. If you allow time for reflection, you will find that many more of your adult visitors are likely to participate in discussions.

Encourage visitors to slow down, reflect, and take time to gather their thoughts. Before saying anything about an object, tell the group that you are going to give them a few minutes of silence just to look at it and think about it. Providing just a few moments for reflection will go a long way toward enriching the tour experience for adults.

Wonder
To experience wonder is to be amazed, to marvel, to be in awe. Though the adult world might seem fairly serious on a day-to-day basis, many look for opportunities to go beyond what they already know, and to stretch and grow.

Museums, zoos, gardens, and parks are great places for visitors to expand their horizons. Think of ways you might awaken their curiosity or amazement. Share with them what excites you while you allow them to make their own discoveries.

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A Neighborhood Partnership

Art Around the Corner

In the early 1990’s, field trip funds for the District of Columbia Public Schools decreased dramatically. That meant that students in the District of Columbia Public Schools were missing out on the bountiful resources available to enhance their education.

In response, the department of teacher and school programs of the National Gallery of Art created a program to invest art into the lives of D.C. students and to support school curriculum objectives. Art Around the Corner, a multiple-visit program, was developed and targeted for fifth and sixth graders. The two-year curriculum combines tours with related in-gallery writing assignments, studio projects, and classroom extension activities. The goals of the program support the visual arts, language arts, social studies, mathematics, and science curriculum standards. And, the initiative works to foster student appreciation for art and an interest in museums. Grants monies secured by the Gallery pay for bus transportation, honoraria for teachers whose students participate in the program, supplies, and program evaluation.

In 1993, the Gallery approached twelve neighborhood schools about participating in Art Around the Corner. The first three schools to respond became pilot schools and continue to be part of this program. At the outset of the relationship, the Gallery made a clear commitment to provide an ongoing, multi-year partnership with these schools. The schools, which expand to a fourth this fall, are facilities that educate primarily African-American, Hispanic, and Asian-American children. Two of these partner schools have no art teachers.

Students in Art Around the Corner come to the Gallery seven times during the school year for small-group, docent-led, inquiry-based tours. Fifth graders are taught the building blocks of art through tours focused on art elements, tools and techniques in painting, and portraits and personalities in sculpture. The sixth-grade curriculum, called “The World Around Me,” builds on what was learned the previous year and challenges the sixth graders increased abstract reasoning skills. Tour themes include origin myths, architecture, heroes and heroines, and the environment.

Art Around the Corner culminates in Family Day during which each student gives a presentation about a work of art to his or her family and friends. This event helps to coalesce the visual, verbal, and critical thinking skills students develop throughout the year.

The Art Around the Corner museum-school collaborative requires a continual dialogue between program staff, teachers, and docents to achieve the common goal of connecting tours to school content standards. Spring curriculum workshops provide an opportunity for teachers to discuss content and suggest themes for pilot tours. For instance, in response to teacher requests for a tour linked to science and geography curricula, program staff (with input from teachers and docents) developed an art and ecology tour. Educators also recommended connecting Gallery lessons to the school district Values Code of Virtues, which includes respect, responsibility, tolerance, and self-control. Suggestions from teachers led to the integration of a time at the end of each tour for student journal writing. The writing assignments ask questions related to tour objectives and require students to make connections between what they see on the tour and their own lives. This activity supports language arts standards while providing assessment tools for teachers, docents, and program staff.

Involving docents in the evolution of Art Around the Corner has been essential, as the docents are the frontline workers who regularly facilitate students' experiences in the museum. Before the start of the program each fall, staff and docents meet in workshops to discuss new tours and related handouts and visual aids. Docents are involved in the development of pilot tours, meeting in the planning stages to offer suggestions on works of art and objectives and afterwards to evaluate them. After all tours, docents provide written feedback on the selection of objects, in-gallery writing assignments and activities, and goals and objectives. Docent and teacher comments are taken very seriously and are used to improve tours and lesson plans for the following year.

Teachers and docents meet each fall before the start of the program for in-service training at the Gallery. Teachers receive lesson plans that include extension activities and web site information for use back at school. The meeting gives teachers and docents an opportunity to plan for the upcoming year and to tailor lessons to meet particular classroom objectives. Each teacher participating...
in Art Around the Corner is assigned two or three docents who always work with the same small group of eight or nine students. Regular contact with teachers and a core group of students help docents adjust to accommodate differences in student learning styles. While Art Around the Corner specifically targets a fifth and sixth grade audience, a broader community connection is an important outgrowth of the program. Gallery staff strives to involve families of students in the program, encouraging family members and guardians to participate in student learning. Families are special guests at Family Day, the culminating event of Art Around the Corner each March. For families who may have difficulty attending the weekday Family Day event, the Gallery offers a special weekend program in the fall, for which bus transportation is provided. The fall weekend programs may include tours, art activities, or film screenings that are appropriate for children. These events provide caregivers and siblings who do not ordinarily come to the Gallery an opportunity to become familiar with its collections and program offerings. Several teachers have mentioned that family programs particularly help immigrant parents learn about the Gallery as a local cultural resource.

Did this targeted program achieve its aims? The impact of this program on fostering student interest has been evaluated by an independent, non-profit learning research organization. Results of their studies indicate that Art Around the Corner students demonstrated excitement, enthusiasm, and comfort that were not evident in a control group.

An evaluation of the long-term impact of Art Around the Corner on students’ abilities to interpret and discuss works of art one to three years after completing the program also elicited positive findings. A comparison of written and oral responses from Art Around the Corner graduates and a control group revealed a vast distinction between the two groups’ abilities to interpret works of art. Even three years after completing the program, Art Around the Corner graduates were more likely to support their observations of a work using detailed evidence. The control group,
on the other hand, offered vague responses that were often personal in nature with little reference to visual cues. Results from these studies demonstrated that *Art Around the Corner* students have an enhanced ability to respond and discuss works of art and have more positive attitudes towards art museums.

Equally significant were anecdotal comments by school educators on the positive effects of *Art Around the Corner* on learning and self-esteem. One teacher said, “Every child relates or learns in a different way. Through art, some children really thrive. It’s another aspect where children can express themselves.” A principal noted that there was less absenteeism on *Art Around the Corner* visitation days. He saw the program as a motivator and felt that it offered children incentives to attend school.

Another principal articulated best the benefits of the curriculum-based program. “*Art Around the Corner* reinforces class work; the follow-up is immediate. It’s not abstract; it’s meaningful. You can teach vocabulary in class and then [students] get to actually see and use the vocabulary in the art museum the following week. This allows them to relate to the vocabulary, to retain it.”

Begun as a pilot program targeting its elementary-school neighbors, *Art Around the Corner* is now an endowed initiative of the National Gallery of Art. Independent evaluation as well as teacher and administration feedback tell us that the program fills a need in a time of district-wide cutbacks in field trips and art instruction. Because tours are curriculum-based, student learning in the Gallery supports the district’s educational agenda. This initiative continues to be successful because of ongoing collaboration with teachers and docents.

Evaluations indicate that, even three years after completing the program, *Art Around the Corner* graduates were more likely to support their observations of a work using detailed evidence.

photo: Susan Witmer

Susan Witmer is coordinator of the multiple-visit program *Art Around the Corner* at the National Gallery of Art. Her e-mail address is: s-witmer@nga.gov. *Art Around the Corner* is made possible by grants from Target Stores, the Park Foundation, Inc., and Janice H. Levin.
Linguistically Diverse Audiences

A few years ago, when I was writing the first draft of this article, I was watching a film called "Life is Beautiful." At one point in the movie, the character played by Roberto Benigni is pretending to be a schoolteacher to save his son from the concentration camp. To everyone around him, he is speaking a language he didn't really understand. I became aware of the fact that I was reading subtitles. In fact, the action on the screen was so visually expressive, my dependence on the spoken and written text was negligible. This experience is often on my mind as I develop programs and train docents for audiences that include, more and more frequently, visitors with limited English proficiency (LEP).

Americans have a love/hate relationship with bilingual education ever since English became the language of commerce and of the new government. All other languages became "second class." New immigrants often wanted their children to learn English and suppressed their own language and culture in order to speed the process of assimilation.

The pendulum swing recognizes the value of bilingualism in a diverse society and a shrinking world. Additionally, the sheer number of non-English speakers in American schools has increased dramatically and demands a response. The National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education (http://www.ncbe.gwu.edu) reports a current K-12 enrollment in the United States of 46,139,064 students, an increase of 13.6% over the last decade. During the decade, however, they report a school enrollment (K-12) of 4,146,997 LEP students, an increase of 104.3%. In many communities, whether their bilingual visitors number in the thousands or merely a handful, educators in zoos, museums, historic houses, and other such institutions are increasingly being asked to provide tours and educational programming for LEP students.

For many years, non-English speaking students were expected to enter the mainstream through an approach called submersion. This "time-honored" technique simply meant throwing non-English speaking students into classes conducted in English and allowing them to sink or swim on their own. This, of course, is not a program and was, in fact, declared illegal by the Supreme Court in 1974 in Lau v. Nichols. Nevertheless, it is, by default, the approach used by many museums and similar venues that have not actively addressed the challenge of LEP visitors.

School systems today generally approach education for LEP students with variations of two distinct philosophies, ESL or bilingual education.

In English as a Second Language (ESL) classes, non-English speakers are taught English much as any foreign language is taught. Students in these classes require additional help in content areas. Sheltered English is an approach used by a number of school systems.

Content area classes are taught by ESL teachers who segregate LEP students from the English speaking students, but use English as the language for content instruction. When ESL students visit a museum, it is usually as part of a "content" class where they often suffer the same fate as the submersion students — little or no support for the visit.

Bilingual education approaches the challenges of the LEP population in a significantly different way than ESL. The difference, of course, is obvious in the name — bilingual. Students continue to speak their first language while learning English. Instruction in both language and content is given in two languages.

At the simplest level, bilingual instruction employs translators, people who speak the students' language but who may or may not be professional teachers. In the classroom, they listen to the teacher and translate her words for the LEP students. When such students visit a museum, their translator usually accompanies them and translates the docent's words. Too often, LEP students whose only support comes from translators learn "tune out" the teacher (or docent) and wait for the translation.

Transitional bilingual classes are widely used in the U.S. Teachers who are fluent in both languages work to transition their students from their native language to English as quickly as possible, usually within two to three years. Developmental or maintenance bilingual programs are currently emphasized in many U.S. schools. In these programs, sometimes called "late exit," students stay in the program until they become literate in both their native language as well as English.

Making the museum accessible is the goal of any program, and museums approach the challenge of making their institution accessible to LEP visitors in a variety of ways. Some offer label copy in multiple languages, or the provide printed gallery guides in several languages. A few offer tours in languages other than English.

Continued on next page.
While these efforts are laudable, they do not address the issue of visits from children in ESL or bilingual school programs. In this case, part of the mission of the museum becomes helping these students learn or refine their understanding and use of English.

Many larger museums, or museums with a significant non-English speaking constituency, offer educational programming that combines elements of both ESL and bilingual education. Some are blessed with bilingual docents who have received the museum's content training, but who also can speak to and understand LEP visitors in both English and their primary language. A few museums work with ESL teachers to devise programs with controlled vocabulary and appropriate hands-on experiences to enrich the difficult experience of learning English. Programs such as these, however, are not yet available in most museums. In cases where the number of LEP visitors is small, bilingual docents scarce, or the number of "second" languages very diverse, museums must find other solutions.

As with any good tour, communication with the scheduling teacher is an important first step. When a teacher calls to arrange a class visit, the scheduler should ascertain if the class is ESL, bilingual, or if LEP students are mainstreamed among a group of native English-speaking children. With ESL and bilingual classes, it will be helpful to know if translators will accompany the children, if any of the children are still monolingual in their native language, and whether or not the classroom teacher prefers the visit to be conducted all in English or in a combination of both languages (if the museum offers that option).

Prior to the visit, the scheduling teacher should be provided with information and activities that can be accomplished within the classroom to help prepare the children for their visit. While this is a good idea with any group of students, it is essential for helping LEP students understand the content of a proposed tour.

Other suggestions are useful in making a visit meaningful for all students.
- Greet the children in both languages with a welcoming word appropriate to the age and culture.
- Pronounce the children's names correctly, even if you must ask more than once how to pronounce them. Don't Anglicize their names or give them "other" names.
Be open to connections between your collection and their native culture. Often they will point these out to you if you have made it clear that you welcome their participation in the tour.

Allow plenty of “think” time after asking a question. Remember, the children may need extra time in understanding your English (different, perhaps, to that of their teacher), considering their answer, forming their mental answer in English, and getting courage enough to speak.

Keep your language simple and use visuals and supporting cues. Use lots of gestures, but be careful to avoid those gestures that might be misunderstood. Be aware of gesture “no-no’s” in their home culture.

Work to remove or diminish your regional accent, and avoid speaking too fast and using idioms and figures of speech in your presentation.

In activities, ask the teacher to help you pair students whose English is minimal with those students who have a better grasp of the language. Allow time for discussion within and among the paired groups before asking for whole group responses.

When identifying artifacts or specimens by name, ask children for the corresponding term in their primary language. Stress that the name of the object isn’t as important as other things we can learn about it.

Finally, strive to create a tour that employs a “third” language, the one that enables me to “understand” Italian in “Life is Beautiful,” appreciate “La Traviata” without supertitles, and laugh at the antics of the early silent movie comedians. Keep the exposition of your tour to a minimum. In a variety of ways, create a tour that illustrates, demonstrates, and lets children participate in the theme. “Show, not tell” is important with all visitors. It’s the key to providing access for LEP visitors.

Jackie Littleton
Associate Editor

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Most Common Language Groups for LEP Students

The U.S. Department of Education reported the following most common language groups represented in U.S. schools during the 1991-92 school year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Percentage of All LEP Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>72.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hmong</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cantonese</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambodian</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korean</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laotian</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Navajo</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tagalog</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creole</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arabic</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portuguese</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armenian</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mandarin</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farsi</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hindi</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polish</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(unspecified dialect)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Targeting One’s Fellow Docents

To target knowledgeable, talkative docents as an audience is an educational challenge. How do you teach the teacher? If you have given a tour for a group of educators, you know that they can be a tough audience. After attending the National Docent Symposium, the docents in North Carolina decided to organize a statewide docent symposium and take on the challenge.

The North Carolina Museum of History in Raleigh hosted the first state symposium in 1997, modeled after the National Docent Symposium. The Mint Museum of Art in Charlotte organized the second biennial North Carolina Docent Symposium, which was held March 26-27, 2000. The purpose of the symposium was education of and interaction with attending docents in order that they might better interpret at their individual institutions. Docents from history, science, art, and natural history institutions attended informative workshops and enjoyed times of fellowship.

To transpose a national model to the regional level requires an understanding of the needs and interests of local docents. Guided by the evaluations of the previous state symposium, the Mint docents compiled a list of possible topics for workshops and then mailed a survey to North Carolina museums. The regional survey resulted in suggestions for speakers and topics. The majority of the North Carolina museums are small historic sites that do not have the resources to send docents or staff to the national symposium. They were eager and hungry for an educational experience and the opportunity to meet other docents with similar concerns.

A symposium is an organic experience that molds to fit the specific concerns of the docents and local environment of the host institution. A state or regional symposium has a different audience than the national model. Most attendees at the national symposium historically are from larger, predominately art-oriented museums. As a larger institution in North Carolina, the Mint docents were surprised that many museums in our region did not have organized docent programs. Over half of the museums represented were history museums. Many sent a staff person who coordinated docents and interpreted the collection along with other responsibilities. There were 130 participants from thirty different institutions with individual concerns.

Symposium Topics
At the beginning of a new millennium, it was fitting that our symposium theme was “Honor the Past and Welcome the Future.” This theme also defined the radical changes and urban transformation of Charlotte. The Mint Museum of Art doubled in size this past year with the opening of a new facility at a separate location, the Mint Museum of Craft + Design. The symposium offered optional bus tours of downtown Charlotte, Museum of the New South, Discovery Place, Historic Rosedale Plantation, the Mint Museum of Art, and the Mint Museum of Craft + Design.

Food is a Southern vehicle for hospitality and encouraging conversation. Our official opening was a dinner at the museum. Danielle Rice, Senior Curator of Education at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, was the keynote speaker. She discussed such issues as how one can tell if a tour has been successful and the impact docents can have on how visitors think, notice, and learn.

To teach docents effectively, learning needs to be experiential and interactive. Participants selected from a menu of topics and workshop offerings, each utilizing a different delivery style. For instance, in the workshop Terms of Engagement: Interactive Gallery Teaching for Adults, Carolyn Woods, educator for university audiences at the Ackland Art Museum, modeled interactive teaching strategies for engaging adult audiences in thoughtful conversations about art. In the workshop Using Multiple Intelligences, docents became active participants playing a “Latin American Cultural Exchange” game or pretending to be an archaeologist in a computer program.

Educators from the Schiele Museum of Natural History and Planetarium and Carolina Raptor Center brought a falcon and an alligator, which caught the attention and curiosity of every docent. And, the workshop Museums to Go: Creating a Wider Audience challenged docents to move beyond the walls of their institutions with their collections and expertise.

Empowering Docents
The Mint docents accomplished
their goal of a state symposium with research and hard work. The staff of the Mint Museum of Art supports the docents' role in enhancing their own education. Mint docents are considered members of the education division staff and empowered to assume leadership and responsibility in their educational programs. They form study groups, research committees and a mentor program, as well as attend conferences.

Marty Clark, the N.C. Docent Symposium chair and southeast regional director of the National Docent Symposium, organized a committee of eight docents to plan the symposium. Logistics also required a clear relationship between museum staff and volunteers. The staff served as advisors and troubleshooters, but the symposium chair assumed the leadership role of coordinating the symposium committee.

Empowering the docents to organize a symposium resulted in a successful educational experience for docents and staff across our state and a source of great pride for Mint docents and staff. The symposium committee had successfully accomplished their goal to "promote continued education of and interaction with docents." A final evaluation gave an opportunity to attendees to suggest new topics and to make recommendations for the next biennial docent symposium. The baton for the N.C. Docent Symposium has now been passed to the docents at the Tryon Palace Historic Sites and Gardens in New Bern, who will adapt the symposium to their own unique strengths and environment.

Susan S. Perry has been the docent coordinator at the Mint Museum of Art in Charlotte, N.C. for the past eight years. Ms. Perry received a B.A. in art and English from Agnes Scott College, a M.F.A. in drawing and painting from California State University, Long Beach, CA, and an M.A. in English from University of North Carolina at Charlotte. She serves as the Southeast Regional Director of AAMV.
Making a 4,050-Ton Ship “Child-Friendly”

By Kristin L. Gallas

One thing that can be said of any U.S. Navy ship is that it has a "wow" factor. No hooks are needed. The ship's size will immediately impress kids. And, it's function — it does have guns doesn't it? — makes excitement a sure bet. But, what can be said about a decommissioned U.S. Navy ship that would make a child understand sonar? How can a seven-year-old make sense of the Cold War? These are the types of questions I posed to myself at the beginning of my internship at The Navy Museum in the Washington Navy Yard in the District of Columbia.

The display ship Barry (DD-933) sits alone in the Anacostia River as a relic of the Cold War. After distinguished combat in Beirut, Cuba, and Vietnam, the Barry was decommissioned in 1984, and sent to the Washington Navy Yard to live out the rest of her days as a "display ship." The United States Navy has many display ships anchored across the country. There are many types of people who visit them, including curious tourists, naval history buffs, and former and current U.S. Navy personnel.

As a museum educator, I was taught that objects can speak, but I'm here to tell you that the Combat Information Center of a Navy ship does not say all that much if you don't know what you are looking at. My mission was to take children from beyond their initial responses, "Wow, this is cool" and "This ship is huge," to a deeper appreciation of what life was like as a sailor on a destroyer, and how important the Barry was to the U.S. Navy's involvement in the Cold War.

Looking out of my office window day after day at the Barry, I began to wonder about its current existence in the Anacostia River, and what role it might play in educating people about the Navy. The Navy Museum's audience is very diverse, and includes all ages, interests, and nationalities. However, I was especially concerned about the school-aged children, as I saw group after group being rushed through the ship in a daze of technical naval lingo. I kept asking myself what messages and information were these children actually coming away with. Did they understand the big "so what" about this ship? After touring the Barry several times, I decided that the ship needed a tour targeted specifically to children. With the agreement of my internship supervisor, who was the head of education and public programs at The Navy Museum, I went about the task of trying to make the ship's tour "child-friendly."

The Navy Museum does not operate formal tours on the Barry. Sailors assigned to the Yard directly from basic training conducted tours of the ship. These sailors have no formal training in tour guiding, despite the fact that The Navy Museum's education officer has offered many times to include the sailors in their docent training. Rapid turn over of personnel made scheduling training sessions inconvenient. The sailors are given a manual to read, and could tell you how every last electrical system on the ship operated. But, many do not know how to communicate information to children. (To their credit, the U.S. Naval personnel who were in charge of the ship's tours were very helpful through the tour writing process.)

For safety purposes, the tour had to begin with what the Navy calls a "safety briefing." Instead of lecturing the students and telling them what they couldn't do, I decided to use the inquiry method. I asked the children to help me remember how we should behave while visiting the Barry. The rules for touring a ship are a bit different from a museum, so we would also discuss the "ship's anatomy" by using inquiry. For example, I'd ask "Does anyone know what word the Navy uses for a 'door'?

Then, I'd ask the children what makes a hatch different from a regular door, and what dangers hatches might pose to visitors.

The tour continues with inquiry components throughout. My favorite part was toward the end. It took place on the forecastle, or fo'c'sle (bow), of the ship. This is the most dangerous part of the ship due to the anchors and running mice. Mice, you may ask! Sailors termed the anchor chains "running mice" as the links appear to scamper across the deck as the anchor is lowered into the water. The running mice, and other "animals" of the fo'c'sle (the elephant's feet, wild cat, turtle backs, etc.) offered a great opportunity to engage children's imaginations. Guides tell their audiences that every ship has animals that live on the bow. Then, they point to a piece of equipment and ask visitors to use their imaginations (as the sailors once did when they created these names) and share with the group what animal they think it looks like. Even adults in the audience get involved, and humor abounds.

To provide follow-up on the tour, and to reinforce the information...
learned, I created a children's activity booklet titled "Honorary Crew Member Log Book." It contains activities and word games for children and families to do during or after their visit.

I took advantage of every opportunity to test the tour. I began by giving the tour to a sailor tour-guide. This was to ensure that all my facts were correct and that I was not delivering any misleading information. Once that was accomplished, I began to seek out school groups, families with young children, and anyone who wanted to take the "children's tour." The evaluation period was valuable and played a significant role in refining the tour.

Among my earliest test groups were 15 fourth graders, three chaperones, a teacher, and a family of three. The teacher commented to me that this was the third year in a row that she had brought her class to the Barry and that this tour was the most interesting.

She particularly liked the interactive components, allowing the kids to ask, as well as answer, lots of questions.

The tour ended up being an hour long, which was a half-hour longer than the regular ship tour. I explained that to provide a quality experience for children, they needed time to look, cognitively interpret, ask questions, and share thoughts. On a 424-foot ship, which is a foreign environment to many visitors, people should not be rushed or they would lose the value of the experience.

The children's tour of the Barry was a big step for me, and had impact upon the interpretation of a piece of U.S. Naval history. And, what was most gratifying, it helped to make a 4,050-ton ship come alive.

Kristin Gallas is currently the education officer at The Montana Historical Society in Helena, MT. Her previously contributed article, "A Guided Research Program Asks the Right Questions" appeared in the Winter 1999-2000 issue of The Docent Educator.
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**Next issue: Tour Conclusions and Follow-Ups**

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