


STORYTELLING: How Do We Tell Our Stories?

Virginia Catherall | Utah Museum of Fine Arts
Lisa Thompson | Natural History Museum of Utah
June 29, 2020 | Salt Lake City, UT

Miss Emily's Guide to the Zoom Room




ETIQUETTE

- ❑ Mute yourself and/or turn off your camera when you aren't speaking.
- ❑ Use the "Raise Hand" or the chat feature to ask questions of our instructors.
- ❑ When you are speaking or participating in small groups, turn your camera on.
- ❑ Please be kind – we are all new to this!


Miss Emily's Guide to the Zoom Room

TECHNICAL ISSUES


- ❑ The mute and camera on/off function buttons are at the bottom left of your Zoom window.
- ❑ To "Raise hand", toggle on "Participants", then "chat".
- ❑ Be careful of intended recipients when using the chat.
- ❑ Trouble? Send a private chat to Jennifer or Emily.




Materials Check



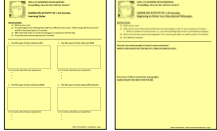
Agenda




Presentation Notes



Hands-On Activity Sheets (x2)



Handout | Exhibit Style Guide Template with Label Hierarchy & UD Reference Guide



If your packet did not arrive in the mail, find these materials electronically at <https://artsandmuseums.utah.gov/steps-ut/>

WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS & PROGRAM OVERVIEW



INT Module Instructors



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Agenda Overview

SCHEDULE

Morning

- Welcome & Overview
- Assignment / Project Check-in
- Reflection on Difficult Stories
- Interpretation Policy & Implementation Approach
- Educational Philosophy

Afternoon

- Style Guides
- Wrap-Up
- Mentor Group Break-outs

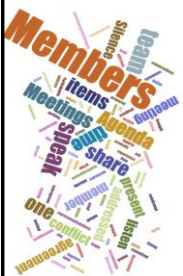
GOALS FOR TODAY

Today we will learn:

- How to tell stories guided by an educational philosophy
- Importance of utilizing different learning styles in interpretation
- The value of a style guide in improving your exhibit practice
- How to begin to create these guiding documents



GROUND RULES



- Responsible for your own learning
- Respect confidentiality of the room
- Honor other people when they are speaking by giving your attention
- Honor time limits
- Return from breaks & lunch on time
- Cell phones & distractions – be cool

HOMEWORK REPORTING OUT

Assignment Review Discussion

ASSIGNMENT: Draft guidelines for building a meaningful relationship with a community partner that could impact your interpretation



- Discussion, Review, and Questions
- Challenges and successes
 - ✓ What has been hard?
 - ✓ What has gone well?
- Preview of your project
 - ✓ Does anyone have ideas of what their project will be?

REFLECTION ON TELLING DIFFICULT STORIES

AAM Conversation



- **Johnnetta Cole**,
Anthropologist,
Educator, Museum
Director & College
President
- **Lonnie Bunch**,
Secretary,
Smithsonian Institution
- **Lori Fogarty**, Director and CEO, Oakland Museum of California



In a special session of the AAM Virtual Annual Meeting and Roundtable, museum leaders Dr. Johnnetta Cole, Lonnie Bunch, and Lori Fogarty come together to reflect on a moment of racial reckoning and what role the museum field can play in it.

***Racism, Unrest, and the Role of the Museum Field* [4:00 minutes]**

<https://www.aam-us.org/2020/06/09/racism-unrest-and-the-role-of-the-museum-field/> [10:45 to 14:27]

Talking Circles-Inspired Discussion

We'll utilize the principles of talking circles to guide our discussion. Remember:

- We are each on our own path in the journey toward anti-racism and cultural competence.
- This work is uncomfortable. It's OK to have questions, experience fear, anger, or guilt, or not know where to start.
- It takes time to learn and grow. There is no end point in this journey.

TALKING CIRCLES 101

- ❑ Everyone has a turn to speak without interruption. You can also choose to pass.
- ❑ Speak respectfully and from your heart.
- ❑ Listen actively with the possibility of being changed.
- ❑ Share just enough.
- ❑ Remain in the circle.
- ❑ Honor confidentiality.

What is the Responsibility of Museums?

Reflecting on our conversation over the last couple of months about telling difficult stories:

- Have recent events shaped your thinking about museums' responsibility to tell difficult stories?
- What difficult story(ies) is your community grappling with now?
- Has your museum taken any action in response to the current moment of pain?
- What would you like to see your museum do to rise to Secretary Bunch's challenge to "make your community, make your region, make your country better"?



MORNING BREAK – 15 minutes



HOW DO WE TELL OUR STORIES?

Interpretation Policy Template

QUICK REVIEW:

- 1) Mission *(You've already got this!)*
- 2) Purpose *(Not too hard!)*
- 3) Key Themes, Topics, and Concepts *(Spend some time)*
- 4) Target Audiences *(Use work from Audience Module!)*
- 5) Visitor Experience Goals *(You have a draft!)*
- 6) Interpretation Formats *(Just make a list!)*
- 7) Implementation Approach *(Stay tuned...)*



7) Implementation Approach

HOW do you tell stories in your museum?

Factors that influence HOW you present your collection and stories may include statements of commitment in areas such as:

- Educational Philosophy
- Professional Presentation
- Thoughtful Administration



Educational Philosophy

HOW are you teaching?

For example:

- The museum's interpretation will consider and serve multiple learning styles.
- The museum's interpretation will be developed in line with scholarly standards.
- The museum's K-12 programming will meet state education core standards.

More on this topic after the break!

Professional Presentation

HOW are you presenting?

For example:

- Interpretation will be provided for [XX%] of displays.
- The museum's interpretation will conform to principles of Universal Design.
- The museum's interpretation formats will not damage its collection or the heritage qualities of its building or site.
- Interpretive labels, signage, and publications will be consistent in style and design. (STYLE GUIDES!)

More on Style Guides after lunch!

Thoughtful Administration

HOW are you ensuring quality?

For example:

- The museum's interpretation activities will be guided by clear and adequate timelines, defined roles and responsibilities, and be codified in annual plans.
- Where appropriate, the museum's interpretation activities will be developed in collaboration with one or more community partners.
- All facets of interpretation programming will incorporate ongoing evaluation.
- Staff and volunteers responsible for interpretation will be trained and have access to ongoing professional development.

We will not be covering this in detail today...

MUSEUM MISSION = PRESERVATION & EDUCATION				
POLICIES	Collections Policy	Interpretation Policy		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish standards, expectations, values, guidance Framework for decisions Define authority & responsibilities Approved by governing authority Not time limited but may evolve & require review 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Mission Purpose & scope of this policy What museum collects (i.e., Scope of Collections) How & from whom the museum collects (donation, purchase, etc.) Compliance with law & ethics Documentation Collections care Decession & disposal Loans (inward & outward) Collection & records accessibility Review frequency & approval 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Mission Purpose & scope of this policy Key Stories, concepts, & topics (WHAT stories do you tell?) Target Audiences (WHO are you telling stories for?) Visitor Experience Goals (WHY are you telling stories?) Interpretation Formats (HOW do you tell your stories?) – Exhibitions, Programs, Publications Implementation-Approach (HOW do you tell your stories?) – Educational Philosophy, Professional Presentation, Thoughtful Administration, etc. Review frequency Approval 		
PROCEDURES	Collections Procedures	Exhibition Procedures	Program Procedures	Publication Procedures
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mechanisms & instructions to implement policy Actions & steps Done by staff – does not have to be approved by governing authority Not time limited but may evolve & require review 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acquisition procedure & forms Accession procedure & forms Record keeping procedure & forms Database guidelines Object marking procedure Object handling procedure Archival materials list & suppliers Inventory procedure & forms Disaster preparedness procedures Integrated Pest Mgmt protocol Decession procedure & forms Loan procedure & forms Image rights & reproduction forms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development process & forms (e.g., Exhibit Planning Worksheet) Timelines (forward planning, frequency of rotation) Traveling exhibits procedure Display requirements (e.g., lighting & archival materials) Universal design procedures Style guide for labels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development process (e.g., roles & responsibilities) Timelines (forward planning, frequency of delivery) Handling difficult topics Guidelines & procedures Community partnership guidelines & procedures K-12 tour group curriculum template Docent training manual Re-enactor training manual 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development process (e.g., roles & responsibilities) Timelines (forward planning) Universal design procedures Style guide for publications Gallery guide procedures Web publishing guidelines
PLANS	Collections Plans	Exhibition Plans	Programming Plans	Publication Plans
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project goals & objectives Timelines & responsibilities Resources needed (both \$\$\$ & human) Time bounded (e.g., annual) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finish collection accession backlog Accession new donations Rehouse textiles Photograph textiles Complete conservation of rugs Inventory 50% of collection Establish IPM protocol & test Write grant for archival supplies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop local companion exhibit for MoMMS traveling exhibition Install UV sleeves on all case & overhead lighting Develop Style Guide Write grant for next FY textile exhibit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop public events for MoMMS exhibit project Develop K-12 tour for MoMMS companion exhibit Collaborate with one community partner for MoMMS tour public program Docent training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop self guide for MoMMS companion exhibit Develop 3 web stories to share textile exhibit content

SEPM-UT Interpretation Policy Template – page 6

How Do We Tell Our Stories?

HOW museums tell their stories is very important because we want to welcome and reach our whole community.

- How can everyone feel welcome in our museum?
- How can we reach such a myriad of people from so many different cultures, communities, and life experiences?
- How can we facilitate learning for everyone?



How Do We Tell Our Stories?

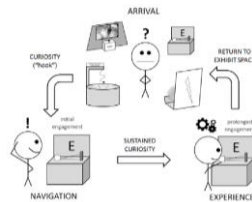
Museums are great places to learn because:

- Museums are informal learning spaces.
- Museums are places where people are given a variety of ways to learn.



Museums are Informal Learning Spaces

- Informal learning is spontaneous and happens anytime and anywhere.
- The learner is self-motivated and eager to gain knowledge about any specific topic or may get an impulse to get familiar with a new topic.
- They are places where people can create their own learning experience.



Formal vs Informal Education

Formal Education	Informal Education
Compulsory	Voluntary
Curriculum-based	Personal interest
Teacher-directed	Self-directed
Set times	Anytime
Typically ages 5-18	All ages, lifelong
Classrooms	Ubiquitous
Assessment	No tests or grades

What Does Informal Learning Look Like in a Museum?

Visualize entering an ideal history museum



People Learn in a Variety of Ways

- Think about the parts of the visualization that had examples of informal learning.
- People learn in a great variety of ways so museums need to facilitate these different ways of learning and provide the best informal education.
- Different experiences, cultures, backgrounds, and lifestyles mean not all people learn in the same way or at the same rate.
- Museums need to facilitate these individualized learning experiences.**

HANDS-ON ACTIVITY #1

LEARNING STYLES

WORLD-AT-INTERPRETATION MUSEUM
Visualizing, what do you tell our students?
HANDS-ON ACTIVITY #1 = 10 minutes
Learning Styles

INSTRUCTIONS:

- Work in your pairs.
- You will be given four drawing tasks with four different instructions. Follow along with the instructor and fill in the boxes below. (20 minutes)
- After each task write 2-3 words describing your experience with the task.
- Group discussion about experience (10 minutes).

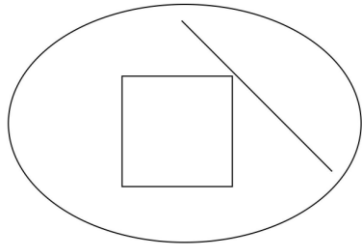
1. Use this space to draw what you SEE.	2. Use this space to draw what you HEAR.
10-15 words, describe your experience.	10-15 words, describe your experience.
3. Use this space to draw what you FEEL.	4. Use this space to draw along with instructor.
10-15 words, describe your experience.	10-15 words, describe your experience.

Interpretation: Learning Styles (2021)

- You will be given four drawing tasks with four different instructions.
- After each task write 2-3 words describing your experience with that part of the task.
- Group discussion about the experience.

HANDS-ON ACTIVITY #1

BOX 1 | Draw What You SEE



HANDS-ON ACTIVITY #1

1. Use this space to draw what you SEE



In 2-3 words, describe your experience:

-
-
-

Reflection

- For **BOX 1** drawing, describe your experience.
- Write down the first 2 or 3 words that come to mind.

HANDS-ON ACTIVITY #1

BOX 2 | Draw What You HEAR

HANDS-ON ACTIVITY #1

2. Use this space to draw what you HEAR



In 2-3 words, describe your experience:

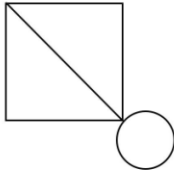
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-
-

Reflection

- For **BOX 2** drawing, describe your experience.
- Write down the first 2 or 3 words that come to mind.

HANDS-ON ACTIVITY #1

Is this what you drew?



HANDS-ON ACTIVITY #1

BOX 3 | Draw What You READ

First, draw a 3 inch circle in the middle of the paper. Next, draw a square surrounding the circle with the sides of the square touching the circle. Finally, draw a 1 inch vertical line in the middle of the circle.

HANDS-ON ACTIVITY #1

3. Use this space to draw what you READ



In 2-3 words, describe your experience:

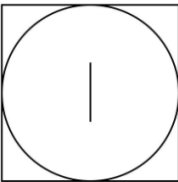
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-
-

Reflection

- For **BOX 3** drawing, describe your experience.
- Write down the first 2 or 3 words that come to mind.

HANDS-ON ACTIVITY #1

Is this what you drew?



HANDS-ON ACTIVITY #1

BOX 4 | Draw Along with Me

HANDS-ON ACTIVITY #1

4. Use this space to draw along with instructor



In 2-3 words, describe your experience:

-
-
-

Reflection

- For **BOX 4** drawing, describe your experience.
- Write down the first 2 or 3 words that come to mind.

HANDS-ON ACTIVITY #1

Final Reflection

- Reflect on these questions:
 - ☐ Which activity was easiest for you?
 - ☐ Which activity was most difficult?
- This was intended to be a fun activity to introduce the concept of multisensory approaches.
- This activity may or may not reflect your learning preferences as we all learn in different ways depending on activity, time of day, setting, etc.

HANDS-ON ACTIVITY #1

Final Reflection Continued

- How can you accommodate a variety of learning styles in the museum? What can it look like?





■ **What can a variety of learning styles look like in the time of COVID?**

SWANER PRESERVE & ECOCENTER

SOLACE
Swaner Online Learning and Community Engagement

Swaner Preserve, like all wild spaces, is often a place of solace when life feels challenging and we're seeking comfort. Now, we've created SOLACE, an online resource for youth, adults, and families to keep learning about nature and the environment during this time of social distancing and transition. We've put together some of our own lessons and activities, and also gathered some of our favorite online resources so you can find them all in one place. Happy learning!

For Kids

SENSATIONAL SPRING! Week 1	HONEY SWEET HOME Week 2	POLLINATOR PAIRS Week 3	SPRING RAZE Week 4	SPROUTING INTO SCIENCE Week 5
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Educational Philosophy

How can you accommodate a variety of learning experiences in your interpretation?

- We want to teach everyone who comes into the museum in the best way for them to learn.
- Embracing current theories about how to teach will help make sure we are reaching everyone.
- Adopting a museum-wide **Educational Philosophy** will help your museum present programs and exhibits in a consistent, ethical, and professional way.



What is an Educational Philosophy?

- States the institution's philosophy of teaching and learning.
- Defines beliefs and policies about a range of educational topics.
- Outlines a set of practices to help **guide decisions** about how institution develops programs and fulfills its educational role.
- Is fundamental for professional museum operations and embodies core museum values and practices.



Why have an Educational Philosophy?

- The commitment to education as central to a museum's public service must be clearly expressed in every museum's mission and is pivotal to every museum's activities.
- Often stakeholders and other people not trained in education need to understand the methods you will employ to teach the public.
- Knowing HOW you will teach** will help staff when implementing an interpretation policy for exhibitions and programs.



Source: Excellence and Equity, American Alliance of Museums, 1992

Educational Philosophy is Museum-Wide

- Educational Philosophy applies to all educational programming not just exhibits.
- Live programming and teaching, publications, online programming should all be guided by your educational philosophy.



Mission vs. Educational Philosophy

An **Educational Philosophy** is different from an institutional **Mission**.

- It defines your museum's learning or theoretical framework.
- It outlines the reason you do what you do and how you do it.
- In other words: **HOW** will you teach your stories?

Let's look at some examples that show a museum's mission vs. its educational philosophy.

Case Study | Vesterheim Museum



Mission

Vesterheim celebrates the living heritage of Norwegian immigrants to America and shares this cultural legacy for the inspiration and enrichment of people of all backgrounds.

Educational Philosophy

As a cultural organization tied to Norwegian-American immigrant experiences, Vesterheim strives to be inclusive and accessible as it shares stories, explores identity, fosters empathy and engagement, and builds community with increasingly diverse audiences... Vesterheim will actively promote discovery and sharing of knowledge to an international audience through authentic and engaging educational programs, exhibitions, collaborations, and outreach.

Case Study | National Videogame Museum

Mission

To preserve the history of the videogame industry by archiving not only the physical artifacts, but also the information and stories behind its creation.



Educational Philosophy

We will present the information and as many of the physical artifacts as possible to the public in an entertaining and informative way. Videogames are meant to be played and that is the underlying thought behind each and every exhibit in the museum. This means that we will do everything in our power to allow museum patrons the opportunity to actually PLAY as many games as possible during their visit to the National Videogame Museum.

Case Study | Utah Museum of Fine Arts

Mission

The UMFA's mission is to inspire critical dialogue and illuminate the role of art in our lives.



Educational Philosophy

The UMFA believes that we learn together by asking questions, experimenting, and collaborating through an open exchange of voices and ideas... Beginning with works of art and their stories, we encourage discussions that extend across cultures to foster awareness and understanding. We strive to serve as an intercultural space that creates opportunities for learners of all ages and styles to arrive at new understandings about art, each other, and the world.

Educational Philosophy

The Educational Philosophy outlines an institution's ideas about teaching and learning. It...

- Summarizes your organization's philosophy about teaching and learning. It is unique to your institution.
- Should align with the AASLH interpretation standards.
- States how your museum will use different content techniques and multi-sensory approaches to accommodate all learners within the scope of the museum's abilities.

*It should not be an all encompassing, pie-in-the-sky statement.
It can highlight doing one thing at a time
based on resources available.*

Will Help You Meet AASLH Standards

INT Standard 2

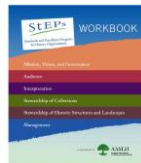
The institution clearly states its overall educational goals, philosophy, and messages and clearly demonstrates that its activities are in alignment with them.

INT Standard 3

The institution understands the characteristics and needs of its existing and potential audiences and uses this understanding to inform its interpretation.

INT Standard 6

The institution uses techniques, technologies, and methods appropriate to goals, content, audiences, and resources.



Case Study Comparison

What Educational Philosophy did you notice in the three examples given?



▪ **Vesterheim:**

- Discovery and sharing of knowledge, authentic and engaging.



▪ **National Videogame Museum:**

- Opportunity to actually play.



▪ **UMFA:**

- Belief in asking questions, experimenting, open exchange of ideas.

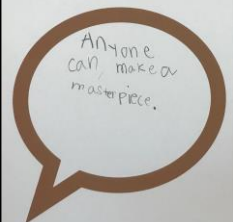
Educational Philosophy in Action

- UMFA's commitment to an open exchange of ideas has created an expectation of learning from the community and asking for their ideas to incorporate in all exhibitions.



Educational Philosophy in Action

Who can make a masterpiece?
 Who makes masterpieces? Trained artists?
 Kids? Thoughtful artists? An elephant? You? What?
 ¿Quién puede crear una obra maestra?
 ¿Quién crea obras maestras? ¿Las personas con
 formación artística? ¿Los niños? ¿Un elefante? ¿Tú? ¿Qué?



- This wall asks visitors "What makes a masterpiece?" (since the exhibition on view used the word masterpiece in the title).
- The museum did not want to tell the visitor what a masterpiece is.



Educational Philosophy in Action

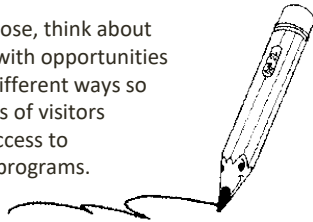
- This is just one idea the UMFA has implemented after adopting its Educational Philosophy.
- This museum-wide philosophy has changed how the museum creates exhibitions, writes labels, and interacts with the community.
- Staff throughout the whole museum know what kind of experience we want our visitors to have and they strive to follow this philosophy throughout exhibits, collections, education, and management.
- How can you envision an Education Philosophy being implemented in your museum?



Writing it Down

What will your Educational Philosophy look like?

- What ways of educating do you want your museum to engage in?
- Whatever you choose, think about providing visitors with opportunities to learn in many different ways so that different kinds of visitors will find an easy access to your exhibits and programs.



Create Educational Philosophy

- 1) Who creates the Educational Philosophy?
- 2) Identify stakeholders to help
- 3) Find resources online & read books that might help
- 4) Visit other museum you admire
- 5) Begin with a list of words then just write!

1) Who Creates the Educational Philosophy?

- You! And your staff.
- Also need the buy-in of the organization, management, and the community.
- Include educators as they have the theoretical and educational background.
- Think about someone familiar with state educational core standards around K-12.



2) Identify Stakeholders to Help

- Local educators and teachers.
- Write a grant to hire a consultant.
- Local university education departments.
- Other museums that are similar in subject, scale, or philosophy.
- Who else?



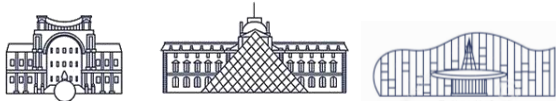
3) Find Resources Online & Read Books

- K-12 Utah Core Standards is one of the first places to visit if schools are an audience.
<https://www.uen.org/core/>
- AASLH and AAM have some great online resources and lists of books that can help.
- A list of helpful books and sites is located at the end of this presentation.



4) Visit Other Museums You Admire

- How does the museum present information?
- What ways did you learn in the museum?
- Do they have an educational philosophy you can use as a reference?



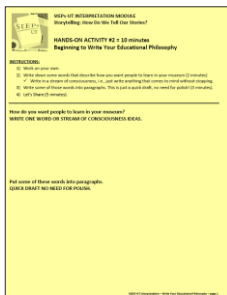
5) Begin with a List of Words Then Just Write!

- Brainstorm words that you want your museum to use (e.g., interact, experience, fun, explore, learn, remember, stories).
- Put those words into paragraphs.
- Ask stakeholders what they think.
- Remember that your educational philosophy can change and morph over time – it is not set in stone!



HANDS-ON ACTIVITY #2

BEGINNING TO WRITE YOUR EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

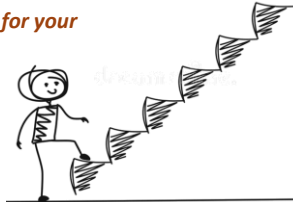


- 1) Take 2 minutes to write down some words that describe how you want people to learn in your museum.
 - o Write in a stream of consciousness, i.e., just write anything that comes to mind without stopping.
- 2) Take 3 minutes to write some of those words into paragraphs. This is just a quick draft, no need for polish!
- 3) Let's share.

Next Steps

- Who needs to see this?
- How do you make it available?
- How can you make sure it is implemented in your museum?

HINT: this is a foundation for your Interpretation Policy!



LUNCH BREAK – 30 minutes



CREATE BETTER EXHIBITS WITH
A STYLE GUIDE

How Does an Exhibit Style Guide Relate to an Interpretation Policy?

Part of your interpretation procedures toolbox

- Your toolbox can include a range of procedures for exhibits, programs, and publications such as:
 - Exhibit development procedures
 - Docent training manual
 - Gallery guide style guide
- They define the processes by which you implement your policies and plans.



Why Create an Exhibit Style Guide?

A style guide improves your storytelling

- Establishes the way your museum speaks and relates to visitors
- Makes your writing more intentional
- Creates consistency that makes it easier for visitors to navigate your exhibits
- Prevents "hodgepodge syndrome"



Why Create an Exhibit Style Guide?

A style guide improves your exhibit development process

- Allows you to avoid reinventing the wheel with each new exhibit
- Serves as institutional memory as staff changes
- Can be an arbiter when differences of opinion arise



What Goes in an Exhibit Style Guide?

Exhibit style guides usually include sections on:



- Voice and Tone
- Usage
- Label Hierarchy
- ID Label Formats
- Graphic Standards

*Take out your template
& follow along as we review sections*

HANDOUT |
Exhibit Style Guide Template with Label Hierarchy & UD Reference Guide

Voice

**Voice is the personality of your museum
as it manifest in its exhibits**



- Imagine the voice of your museum is a person who walks through an exhibit with visitors.
- Who is this person? What are they like? How do they relate to visitors? How do you hope visitors describe this person?
- Here are some ideas: friendly, conversational, accessible, informal, direct, invites visitors to explore, helps visitors feel competent
- By way of contrast, the voice of museums in the past was often authoritative, formal, and highly intellectual

Some Examples of Different Voices

How Long Ago Is 66 MILLION YEARS?

**It's hard to imagine such
a mind-boggling amount
of time.**

So try this: open and close your hands quickly. Each time you do it represents a year. Now picture doing this 24/7 for two years. That's how long you'd have to "flash" your hands to represent 66 million years.

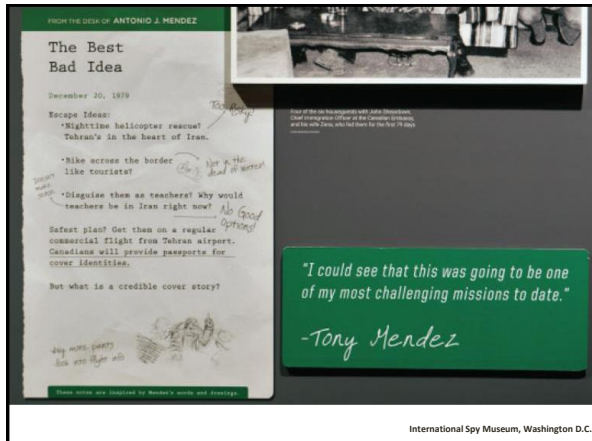
Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History

PAINSTAKING PERFECTIONISM

Louisa Green Furches was not an easygoing person. In 1852 she began making a quilt for her upcoming wedding, causing several stressful months for her family. Quilting at 11 stitches per inch for hours each day, Furches's fingers began to "fester," her daughter recalled in a 1951 letter. Louisa's mother and sister Sarah pitched in to help. But Louisa, concerned about the quality of her sister's stitches, "took Sarah's out."

Like many elite women, Furches took great pride in her sewing. She won a cash prize for her quilting at the Davie County Fair and gained a reputation in her community as one "who did beautiful needlework," one relative later remembered.

North Carolina Museum of History



International Spy Museum, Washington D.C.

THE WORLD IN A CUP

Every cup of coffee, tea, and chocolate tells a story.

A global story...both *bitter* and *sweet*,
of vessels adapted and transformed,
of economic systems built on power and subjugation,
of identity, both self-defined and imposed,
of traditions shared across time and place.

Perhaps there has never been anything simple
about a cup of coffee, tea, or chocolate.

#SiptheStory

Detroit Institute of Arts

Tone



**If voice is the personality of exhibits,
tone is their mood or attitude**

- The voice could be humorous, but the tone could be silly, dark, or sarcastic.
- Tone will vary within your voice depending on the topic of an exhibit or the purpose of a particular label.
- Are there some elements of tone you always want to have or to avoid? (e.g., avoid condescending, trivial, or scolding)
- Your style guide can specify identifying the tone that will best fit the topic and goals for your exhibit and be consistent with the museum's voice as part of the exhibit development process.

Some Examples of Different Tones

Portrait of Mary Leakey, **failed* scientist** (b.1913)

After causing an explosion in a chemistry lab at one school and with a general habit of failing exams, Mary Leakey was expelled from every secondary school she attended.

**Mary Leakey uncovered evidence that gave us groundbreaking insights into human origins and is considered one of the most important paleoanthropologists of our time.*

Pacific Science Center, Seattle, WA

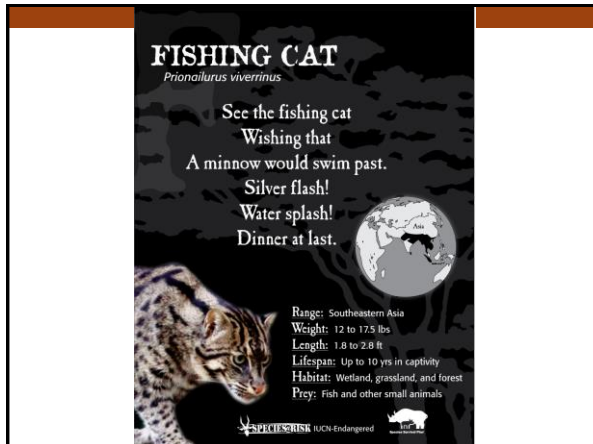
F IS FOR FUDGE (#%~!)

The Denver Boot

It's not just Denverites who get the boot. Cities around the world use this frustrating, foiling, debilitating device, but we're known for it. Police used to tow offending cars to the pound and list their contents. But in 1955, in the first 25 days of using the boot instead, Denver collected more than \$18,000 (equal to more than \$150,000 now). The immobilizer saves time and money.

Thanks to Denver inventor, pattern maker, violinist, and entrepreneur Frank Marugg, who came up with the boot, our town has one of the largest collection rates for parking fines of any city in the country.

History Colorado Center, Denver, CO



Usage: The Basics

The mechanics of writing that support your voice and tone

- Choose a **style manual** for basic usage questions, such as:
 - *The Chicago Manual of Style*
 - *The Elements of Style* by Strunk and White
- Decide how your museum will handle **common issues**, like:
 - Dates (AD 1600, 2000 BC, 65 million years ago)
 - Capitalization (common names of plants and animals)
 - Numbers (when to spell them out)

Usage: Specialized Issues

Decide how you'll handle specialized issues

- Referring to indigenous peoples past and present
- Words to avoid and why (e.g., Anasazi)
- Common terms with multiple spellings (e.g., piñon or pinyon, tipi or teepee)
- Introducing scientific terms, foreign language or unusual words
- Pronunciation keys
 - Try the Wikipedia pronunciation respelling key
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Help:Pronunciation_respelling_key

Usage: What's your Approach?

Establish guidelines for your approach to writing

- Reading level
 - Try the Hemingway app
<http://www.hemingwayapp.com/>
- Jargon, culture-specific references, and humor
- Approach to translation



Label Hierarchy

Defines the different types of labels in your museum, their purpose, components, and word counts

- A clear label hierarchy will help visitors navigate an exhibit and connect to its Big Idea.
- Over time, a label hierarchy will eliminate the need to reinvent the wheel with each new exhibit
 - Some flexibility is OK. You may not need all label types in every exhibit, or you may need to add a new one
- We'll do quick overview of the NHMU label hierarchy and then dive into an example of defining purpose, components, and word counts.

Overview of a Label Hierarchy

From broad ideas to the specific



- Exhibition Title & Introduction
- Section (or Subtheme) Introduction
- Mindset
- Focus Panel
- IDs (Extended IDs and tombstones)
- Photo Captions and Credits
- Activity prompts
- Quotes
- Spotlight Panels

Basic building blocks

Texture

A Focus on Focus Panels at NHMU

Focus panels are one label type in NHMU's label hierarchy

The Fremont farmers of Median Village were also hunters

Abundant bones from mule deer, mountain sheep, birds, and jackrabbits found at the site show that the Fremont hunted more than their Ancestral Puebloan neighbors, just 50 miles to the south. Buried corn cobs and a storage granary tell us they grew corn and probably beans and squash. They gathered many wild plants too. When they abandoned the village, in AD 1050, they left pit houses, ceramic figurines, pottery, and tools made of stone and bone.



A Focus on Focus Panels at NHMU

A label hierarchy should provide guidelines about the role of each panel type in the system. For example:

"Focus panels invite visitors to dig more deeply, look more closely, and learn more about particular groupings or objects within an individual exhibit. This is where "studiers" or diligent visitors can find more, and more complex, information. It is critical that focus labels to remain focused. Don't succumb to the urge to tell everything there is to know, or even the studiers won't read these labels. A clearly composed subhead should lead the way to a focused block of text. Focus panels should connect directly to what is on display and should guide visitors to look at specific objects or features."

A Focus on Focus Panels at NHMU

A label hierarchy should explain in detail the elements each panel type should/may contain:

"Subhead, one paragraph of 5-7 lines with 40-50 characters per line (total word count: 50-60). A photograph, diagram, or illustration will often accompany a focus panel to further expand on the topic. These graphic elements will include captions. Rail focus panels will have line lengths of up to 60 characters."

ID Labels (aka Tombstones)

Spend some time defining your ID label formats

- Many of your museum-specific issues will pop up
- Apply your voice here too. It's easy to slip into expert jargon
- Different types of objects may need different formats



Specify Format for ID Labels

Include elements, order, and format of ID labels in your Label Hierarchy

Two Grey Hills Rug, circa 1940
Artist Unknown, Navajo
Wool, natural & aniline dyes
Gift of Sarah Hatch Smith
UMNH 1997.8.4

NHMU's ID label format for ethnographic collections

Object name (Yeibecheai Doll; Two Grey Hills Rug), **Date** (2005; circa 1900; 1890s)

Artist if known (Ken Williams), **Tribal affiliation** (Ute, Goshute)

Materials (listed with leading capital letter, no period, e.g., Buckskin, glass beads, sinew)

Credit line (e.g., Gift of...; On loan from ...;)

Object-unique UMNH identification number

ID Labels (aka Tombstones)





The Difference a Style Guide Can Make

Before

MIRROR FRAME
Painted Cartapesta (papier mâché)
Workshop of NEROCIO DEI LANDI (1447–1550)
SIENNESE; last quarter of the 15th century
850–1884

This type of mirror frame, showing an emblematic female head, exists in several examples in various media; a maiolica version (C.211–1910) is exhibited in room 14. This work is characteristic of NEROCIO DEI LANDI, who trained under Vecchietta and was active in Siena both as a painter and a sculptor.

So Much Better!

After

MIRROR FRAME
About 1475–1500
Workshop of Neroccio dei Landi (1447–1550)

The mirror, which is now missing, would have been a disc of blown glass or polished metal. As well as being an expensive novelty, mirrors were thought to reveal the inner truth. This frame invited a moral comparison, since the viewer's face appeared below the beautiful (and therefore virtuous) image above. [52 words]

Italy, Siena
Painted *cartapesta* (papier mâché)

Museum no. 850–1884

From Gallery Text at the V&A: A Ten Point Guide, Victoria & Albert Museum

Graphic Standards: Fonts

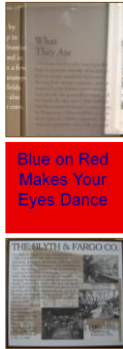
Aesthetics are important, but legibility is supreme!

- Think simple and clear when it come to fonts
 - List your official font(s) or characteristics of fonts you will consider
 - Specify how many fonts you will use in any given exhibit. Two is probably enough.
 - Provide guidelines for bold and italics
- Don't rely on bold and italics to do the work of good writing. Use sparingly.
 - Include guidelines for font size
- Always take viewing distance into account

Graphic Standards: Colors & Alignment

Please don't make my eyes hurt

- Provide guidelines for background and font colors
 - Focus on contrast and legibility
 - Avoid red/green combinations
 - Be careful with images behind text
- Include guidelines for text alignment
 - Default to flush left, ragged right
 - Indicate when center or right justified text might be warranted



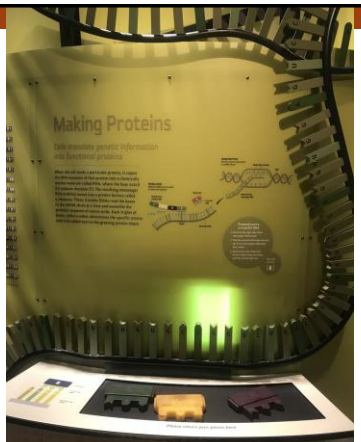
Graphic Standards: Accessibility

Use accessibility as a touchstone

- Universal design approaches make exhibits better for all visitors
- Consider specifying an accessibility resource:
 - Universal Design Guidelines
<https://www.mos.org/sites/dev-elvis.mos.org/files/docs/misc/UD%20poster.pdf>
 - Programmatic Accessibility Guidelines for National Park Service Interpretive Media
<https://www.nps.gov/features/hfc/guidelines/>

Same Style Guide, Different Exhibits

A Mindset Panel from NHMU's Life Gallery







Getting the Most Out of Your Style Guide

Four Easy Steps:

- 1) Create your style guide. Start simple and just do it.
- 2) Keep your style guide close at hand and refer to it often.
 - Team review it at the start of every exhibit project.
 - Use it to answer questions/resolve differences of opinion.
- 3) Once you have a solid style guide, resist the temptation to change it without a really good reason. But on the other hand, don't let it hamstring you. It's a fine balance ...
- 4) The more you use it, the more you'll love it!

CHAT BOX DISCUSSION

STYLE GUIDE Q & A

- What questions do you have about style guides and how you might create or use one in your museum?
 - ▢ What aspects of a style guide are still unclear?
 - ▢ What seems most challenging about creating a style guide?
 - ▢ How would your museum benefit from a style guide?
- Type your question in the chat box or raise your hand.
- If you have other questions, feel free to ask!



AFTERNOON BREAK – 15 minutes



WRAPPING IT UP!

Quick Recap | What We've Covered

Interpretation Policy: Implementation Approach

- How to tell stories based on educational philosophy
 - 1) The Importance of utilizing different learning styles in interpretation
 - 2) Beginning to write an educational philosophy
- An Exhibit Style Guide will improve your storytelling and exhibit development process.
 - 1) Tools for creating your own style guide



Recommended INT Resources for Today

Museum Policy: What Policies Should a Museum Cover? <http://www.londonmuseums.org/policy.htm>

Erskine-Loftus, Pamela, *Museum Education Policy: Integrating theory, practice and regional specificities* https://www.academia.edu/1088096/Museum_Education_Policy_integrating_theory_practice_and_regional_specificities

Falk, John, *Identity and the Museum Visitor Experience* <https://www.amazon.com/Identity-Museum-Visitor-Experience-John/dp/1598741632>

Koutsika, Gina, *Museum-ID: Informal Learning in Museums: Opportunities and Risks* <https://museum-id.com/informal-learning-museums-opportunities-risks-gina-koutsika/>

Bartlett, Dan, "Well-Chosen Words and Carefully Articulated Ideas: Teaching Interpretive Writing," *NAME Exhibitionist*, 33, no. 2 Fall 2014

Gallery Text at the V&A: A Ten Point Style Guide. London: Victoria & Albert Museum, 2007. www.vam.ac.uk/files/file_upload/10808_file.pdf

Screven, Chandler, "Motivating Visitors to Read Labels," *ILVS Review: A Journal of Visitor Behavior* 2, no. 2 (1992): 183-211.

Serrell, Beverly, *Exhibit Labels: An Interpretive Approach*, Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira Press, 1996.

Programmatic Accessibility Guidelines for National Park Service Interpretive Media, Version 2.3, May, 2017, Prepared by the Harpers Ferry Center Accessibility Committee <https://www.nps.gov/features/hfcr/guidelines/>

HANDOUT | Museum Style Guide Template with Label Hierarchy & Universal Design Reference Guide

INT Self-Assessments

- Self-assessment tool in your **Google spreadsheet**
 - ✓ Separate tab for each of the six modules
 - ✓ A column for filling out your status pre- and post-module
 - ✓ Space at bottom of each tab to indicate what projects undertaken for each module and date completed
- **Individual links** – you have your own spreadsheet
 - ✓ Jennifer has sent your link to you and your mentor
 - ✓ Ask for help if needed please

DUE DATE: INT post-module completed by 7/27

INT post-module completed by July 27

StEPs-SelfAssessment-Template

The last time saved: 6/18/2020 10:11:11 AM. Last saved time: 6/18/2020 10:11:11 AM.

StEPs-SelfAssessment-Template

StEPs-SelfAssessment-Template

StEPs-SelfAssessment-Template		Pre-Module		Post-Module	
SECTION NAME: Your organization's name		Assessment Date	Assessment Date	Assessment Date	Assessment Date
1	1. The institution's vision, mission, and values are clearly articulated and guide all activities.				
2	2. The institution's vision, mission, and values are clearly articulated and guide all activities.				
3	3. The institution's vision, mission, and values are clearly articulated and guide all activities.				
4	4. The institution's vision, mission, and values are clearly articulated and guide all activities.				
5	5. The institution's vision, mission, and values are clearly articulated and guide all activities.				
6	6. The institution's vision, mission, and values are clearly articulated and guide all activities.				
7	7. The institution's vision, mission, and values are clearly articulated and guide all activities.				
8	8. The institution's vision, mission, and values are clearly articulated and guide all activities.				
9	9. The institution's vision, mission, and values are clearly articulated and guide all activities.				
10	10. The institution's vision, mission, and values are clearly articulated and guide all activities.				
11	11. The institution's vision, mission, and values are clearly articulated and guide all activities.				
12	12. The institution's vision, mission, and values are clearly articulated and guide all activities.				
13	13. The institution's vision, mission, and values are clearly articulated and guide all activities.				
14	14. The institution's vision, mission, and values are clearly articulated and guide all activities.				
15	15. The institution's vision, mission, and values are clearly articulated and guide all activities.				
16	16. The institution's vision, mission, and values are clearly articulated and guide all activities.				
17	17. The institution's vision, mission, and values are clearly articulated and guide all activities.				
18	18. The institution's vision, mission, and values are clearly articulated and guide all activities.				
19	19. The institution's vision, mission, and values are clearly articulated and guide all activities.				
20	20. The institution's vision, mission, and values are clearly articulated and guide all activities.				

INT Module Checklist (Take #2)

StEPs-Participant & Monitor Checklist

Interpretation (INT) Module | April 2020-June 2020

Task	Responsible	Due Date	Completed	Notes
1. Complete the self-assessment for the INT module.	StEPs participant	6/18/2020		
2. Complete the self-assessment for the INT module.	StEPs participant	6/18/2020		
3. Complete the self-assessment for the INT module.	StEPs participant	6/18/2020		
4. Complete the self-assessment for the INT module.	StEPs participant	6/18/2020		
5. Complete the self-assessment for the INT module.	StEPs participant	6/18/2020		
6. Complete the self-assessment for the INT module.	StEPs participant	6/18/2020		
7. Complete the self-assessment for the INT module.	StEPs participant	6/18/2020		
8. Complete the self-assessment for the INT module.	StEPs participant	6/18/2020		
9. Complete the self-assessment for the INT module.	StEPs participant	6/18/2020		
10. Complete the self-assessment for the INT module.	StEPs participant	6/18/2020		
11. Complete the self-assessment for the INT module.	StEPs participant	6/18/2020		
12. Complete the self-assessment for the INT module.	StEPs participant	6/18/2020		
13. Complete the self-assessment for the INT module.	StEPs participant	6/18/2020		
14. Complete the self-assessment for the INT module.	StEPs participant	6/18/2020		
15. Complete the self-assessment for the INT module.	StEPs participant	6/18/2020		
16. Complete the self-assessment for the INT module.	StEPs participant	6/18/2020		
17. Complete the self-assessment for the INT module.	StEPs participant	6/18/2020		
18. Complete the self-assessment for the INT module.	StEPs participant	6/18/2020		
19. Complete the self-assessment for the INT module.	StEPs participant	6/18/2020		
20. Complete the self-assessment for the INT module.	StEPs participant	6/18/2020		

- Post-module self-assessment completed by 7/27/2020
- We are using these for program evaluation – which will help with future funding for this program
- Your participation matters!



Getting Your StEPs Certificates



- Remember your institutional commitment
- Apply for Bronze but shoot for beyond
- Applications in your StEPs Workbook (at end of each module section)
 - ❑ Fill it out using your post-module self-assessment
 - ❑ Send to AASLH
 - ❑ If you are unsure of your organization's institutional member number, Jennifer can help connect you to AASLH
- When you get the certificate, take a picture and send it to us!



We Got Money for You!

- Project funding for Year 2 projects to assist in achieving Bronze level or higher
- Up to \$1,500
- Application opens July 1 & closes September 1

Eligibility

- ❑ Are a Certified Utah Museum
- ❑ All **pre- and post-self assessments completed** for Year 2 modules
- ❑ Achieved **Bronze Level Certificates (or higher)** for each StEPs Standards module covered in Year 2 modules (COLL, HSL, INT) or provide evidence in your application that the project for which you seek funding will help you achieve a Bronze level or higher
- ❑ Have sent at least one representative to **all program-related activities**
- ❑ Have followed through with **workshop assignments** related to your projects
- ❑ Have participated in mentor site visits and worked in **good faith with mentor**
- ❑ **Completed your final report from Year 1 funding OR have let Jennifer know you need an extension OR did not apply for funding for Year 1 projects**
- ❑ Year 1 Project Reports DUE September 1 (unless other arrangements made)


Project Funding: Online Application

Find links to Guidelines, Application Form & Budget Template at
<https://artsandmuseums.utah.gov/steps-ut/>

jenniferortiz@utah.gov'." data-bbox="138 465 405 605"/>

INT | Evaluation

<https://forms.gle/2ea33XPcrpJtv2Ck6>



StEPs-UT Wrap-Up Evaluation

- We want to know how it's been!
- Soon Kari will be contacting the point person from each museum via email to set up a time for a phone call.
- Everyone who has been involved with the program and attending the workshops is invited to participate in the calls.
- Mentors, instructors, and administrators will also be contacted and interviewed.



Connect With Your Mentor

MENTORS



Karen Krieger
Museum Consultant
801.541.1896
karenkrieger@msn.com

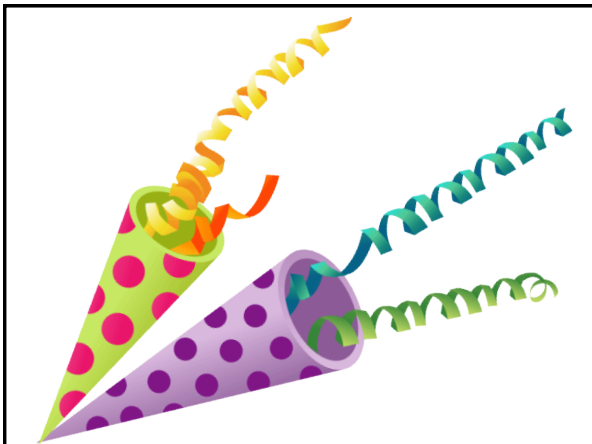


Pam Miller
Museum Consultant
435.650.2900
9milepam@gmail.com



Steve Olsen
LDS Church History Department
801.598.7966
olsensl@ldschurch.org

- Mentor on-site visits move online due to quarantine.
- Suggest video meetings instead of phone calls so your whole team can be involved.
- Office of Museum Services is happy to set aside time for you to host your meetings on its Zoom account if desired.
- To book Zoom Room, contact:
emilyjohnson@utah.gov
jenniferortiz@utah.gov



Wrap-Up

- **STEPS-UT is a partnership** between the Utah Division of Arts & Museums, Utah Humanities, and Utah Division of State History, and is supported by funding from the Utah Department of Heritage & Arts and the State of Utah.
- Thanks to **AASLH**, **NHMU (Becky Menlove)**, and **Museum of Science** for resources.
- Please do fill out the **INT survey link** that we will send you.
- **HUGE THANKS TO ALL OF YOU FOR YOUR COMMITMENT & TENACITY!**
- **Mentor & Mentee Break-out Groups** – zoom room open until 5pm.

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