

Professional

1. Kristin Fong

American Museum of Western Art, Denver, Colorado

Creating Interdisciplinary School Programs

Abstract – When the American Museum of Western Art (AMWA) was founded, no education program was in place. In the 7 years since then, the Museum has offered interdisciplinary programming so more school groups have been attracted to the Museum. AMWA will present a case study that museum educators, docents, and students can use as an example for growing their own school programming. How AMWA was able to develop, market, and deliver better school programs and create a sustainable model for the future using the permanent collection as inspiration for custom field trips. By drawing interdisciplinary connections during visits, schools are better able to rationalize the time and commitment to a field trip, and the Museum is able to reach a broader audience of educators.

2. Kristin Fong and Colleen Sullivan

American Museum of Western Art, Denver, Colorado

Volunteers as Content Experts

Abstract – The American Museum of Western Art (AMWA) has recently recruited volunteers as content experts. Its volunteers are passionate, knowledgeable, and excited to share their expertise with visitors and staff. While recruiting and training volunteers can take time, energy, and maintenance, by setting up boundaries and laying out a clear observation and survey process, the Museum can use volunteers' skillsets and feedback from their interactions with visitors to create improved training materials and in-gallery interpretation. Recent drafts of AMWA's observation forms and volunteer surveys provide a basis for continued program evaluation. These examples underscore the Museum's mutually beneficial solution to visitors' interpretation needs while recognizing volunteers' unique contributions.

3. Joshua Morris and Nona Miller

Smoky Hill Museum, Salina, Kansas

Creative Environments for Curious Minds

Abstract – Creating meaningful visitor engagement is a goal, and a challenge, for museums. The current high-tech atmosphere with its emphasis on spectacle and glitz adds to that challenge. Interactive elements play an important role in capturing the museum visitor's attention and according to feedback are among the more popular features. In response, The Smoky Hill Museum created The Curiosity Shop. To generate a deeper level of engagement, a multi-level approach was imperative. Appealing to numerous senses, modes of learning and multiple intelligences, visitors have abundant avenues to explore and discover. When coupled with a well-told story and creative design, the likelihood of a lasting impact and return visit is enhanced. The

Smoky Hill Museum's Curiosity Shop presents a dynamic and vibrant space where tactile learning takes center stage. Visitor feedback and increased attendance confirm the effectiveness of this approach. Since opening in 2017, overall attendance has doubled.

Students

1. Chen Du

Heritage and Museum Sciences Program, Museum of Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas

Gallery Boxes for Education Programs in Small Museums

Abstract – Educational programs within a museum are significant tools that can be used to connect the public with museum resources. A continuing challenge for many museums is trying to meet the needs of visitors while having a small education staff. The use of Gallery Boxes/Backpacks is a way that can help connect visitors with content, and also potentially reach more visitors than a small education staff can accommodate. For an exhibit on African and North American grasslands, the Education Division of the Museum of Texas Tech University created several education boxes, for diverse ages, that expand content knowledge for visitors and their families. Boxes contain objects, photos, and/or picture cards. Placed adjacent to the entrance of the gallery, the boxes encourage parents and children to explore focused content related to the exhibit. The Gallery Boxes provide a distinguished learning experience for different ages and needs.

2. Elise Dukart and Emily Williams

Heritage and Museum Sciences Program, Museum of Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas

Storage Solutions for Bed Frames in Museum Collections

Abstract – Museum staff often face difficulties determining the best storage solutions for objects of irregular size. One example is bed frames, items that typically are large and intricately structured. These characteristics contribute to preventive conservation concerns regarding storage space and potential object damage. To address the issue of storing bed frames, various housing options, including vertical and horizontal storage, have been tested by comparing small-scale models housing a selection of bed frames in ranging sizes. This comparison determined the stability and consolidation of frames in different storage options while keeping in mind the need to maintain a small storage footprint. Combining vertical and horizontal storage units have been found necessary to accommodate all bed frame requirements. These results demonstrate possible housing alternatives that improve the organization and stability of such irregular objects, protect the objects from themselves and other bed frames, reduce storage space, and promote current preventive conservation practices.

3. James Ferguson

Heritage and Museum Sciences Program, Museum of Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas

Hard Hat Required ...Protecting Collections During Construction

Abstract – When a museum undergoes construction, all collections need to be protected from construction equipment, dust, and other airborne particulates all on a limited budget. The Museum of Texas Tech University recently underwent construction for the institution's Life Safety Project. Objects were relocated to safe areas whenever possible, or wrapped with Tyvek and plastic sheeting. All cabinets and shelving in a collection area were wrapped in plastic and sealed with tape to ensure dust and airborne particulates did not enter through small openings. Construction professionals placed additional protective measures. Construction work was done with at least one museum professional present that could stop work if the collections were at risk. These measures protected documents when the new sprinkler heads leaked in our Documents Room. These practices showed that any museum, regardless of staff or budget, are capable of protecting collections during construction projects.

4. Lynsay Flory

North Dakota State University, Fargo, North Dakota

Private Histories for the Public Good

Abstract – Non-professional histories, versions of the past created by private individuals, are propagated in ways that draw the public. By researching how grassroots history engages the public, professionals can find ways to incorporate private methods into their own work in an ethical manner. Personal history can be seen across the Mountain-Plains region today. Threshing shows are one example. Through observations in three states, interviews, and additional documentation, this case study finds that threshing shows, and museum events with similar structures, draw up to tens of thousands of people, most looking for a personal connection to the region's past. Museums often find such lay methods impractical, labor intensive, and hard to sustain. Case study data show community collaboration, heightened interest in local history, and museum relevance are outcomes worthy of the investment. Consciously and carefully opening up museums to the possibilities inherent in personal pasts holds potential benefits for entire communities.

5. Nikki Greer and Sarah Jones

Lubbock Lake Landmark Intern, Lubbock, Texas

Heritage and Museum Sciences Program, Museum of Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas

Increasing Special Education Visitorship Using Promotional Methods: A Case Study at the Lubbock Lake Landmark

Abstract – The Lubbock Lake Landmark, an active archaeological and nature preserve, is committed to providing experiences that encourage and engage learners in nature and history. The Landmark continues to expand educational opportunities that encourage life-long learning by providing a variety of low sensory activities for visitors with special needs. The case study at the Landmark has studied promotional methods with the objective of increasing attendance of special needs children and their families. Promotional methods include school outreach, social media postings, media outlets, and interaction with local children-focused organizations. Visitors have been given surveys to provide feedback about how they heard about the Landmark, their visit experience, and likelihood of a return visit. Attendance numbers have been recorded and evaluated. Surveys indicate that organizational interaction generated the most resulting visits. This case study establishes insights for museums and heritage sites on the best advertising practices to reach the special education community.

6. Nicole Hawke

Heritage and Museum Sciences Program, Museum of Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas

The Artist Surrogate – A New Collections Management Document

Abstract – Conservators face ethical and technical issues without artist guidance upon repairing damaged works. It is a challenge to undertake repairs without impinging on the artist's intent, especially if the artist is no longer living. Developed in the Art Division of the Museum of Texas Tech University alongside research on the most common conservation issues, a new collections management document called the Artist Surrogate collects detailed information on all materials used and advice from the artist in case of damage to the work or future need for conservation. Its depth of inquiry into object description ensures that the document can be employed widely in many museums. The creation of the Artist Surrogate is the first phase of a two-part project. The second phase is testing of the document by several museums as they acquire works of art by living artists to determine whether the document is versatile enough to be effectual.

7. Katie Holt

Heritage and Museum Sciences Program, Museum of Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas

Developing Best Practices for the Preservation and Exhibition of Herbarium Specimens

Abstract – Among natural history museums, herbaria have a unique set of circumstances when it comes to balancing exhibition of a specimen while maintaining the longevity of the specimen. Several of the mounted specimens found in the Texas Tech University Herbarium showcase a lack of proper method and materials used. This study involves compiling, analyzing, and discussing different preservation and mounting methods for herbarium specimens, across different herbaria. Herbarium curators from different institutions have been interviewed and a review conducted that focused on

different mounting strategies. Based on these approaches, appropriate mounting strategies have been identified. These also may vary depending on the type of plant material. Utilizing these strategies ensures best preservation and increased knowledge regarding proper housing and organization of collections, as well as improved display techniques among museums and libraries. This study sets the stage to develop a best practice network across several herbaria and raise visibility for herbaria among local audiences via proper and effective exhibition.

8. Alexandra Jones and Raven Lafave

Heritage and Museum Sciences Program, Museum of Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas

Public Insight on Online Museum Databases

Abstract – Project aims are to find a free of charge, user-friendly online database that can bring awareness to lesser known resources and to encourage access to online collection databases. The constant threat of budget cuts to museums should encourage museum professionals to create cost-effective databases. Database services that are free of charge, user friendly, and accessible to the public create an appeal for museums. Lack of security and possible breach of information may discourage museums from using these databases. Three free online databases for museum use have been tested by inputting objects that are not security sensitive, in order to determine if the databases meet the standards and best practices set by museums.

Data are assessed by ranking the number of objects allowed on a single database, limited accessibility, and amount of storage available for museums to input information.

Results indicate these databases serve public purpose for museums. By using free, secure, and user-friendly database creation software, museums can achieve accountability for their collections.

9. Taylor Mills

Museum Studies Program, University of Central Oklahoma, Edmond, Oklahoma

The Dutch Church Collection Project at London's Lambeth Palace

Abstract – The Dutch Church Collection Project was a cooperative project between the University of Central Oklahoma and London's Lambeth Palace Library and Dutch Church. The reading room of the Library in London served as the central location for the project. Using the Lambeth Palace database, students cataloged books by measuring, photographing, and counting the folios within each book. Students received field work experience unavailable to them in Oklahoma, and they developed their network to include international professionals. This project allowed the institutions to use their time and money for other aspects of their collections and contributed to the Dutch Short-Title Catalog that international researchers use to understand what books are available. It demonstrated that students benefit from applied research opportunities, for it helps familiarize them with diverse museum practices and collections. The project effected the students, the museum professionals in London, and universal scholarship.

10. Megan Ostrenga

Heritage and Museum Sciences Program, Museum of Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas

Evaluating Oneself: A Method to Determine the Efficacy of an Institution's Educational Programming

Abstract – Through a comparative study and ranking of 16 National Park Junior Ranger Programs, an evaluation system to determine the efficacy of an educational program has been developed. This evaluation system consists of a rubric and scoring system that assesses programs through two different lenses. The first rubric identifies parallels between specific education programs and the programming done by associated regional institutions, providing a method to monitor consistency throughout all affiliated programs. The second rubric grades the educational programming from a teacher's perspective through the program's application of Bloom's Taxonomy, isolation of action verbs that lead to higher levels of thinking, differentiation in activities for various learning styles, compliance with national and state educational standards, and integration of current events, cultural dynamics, or "shock" strategies. These evaluation methods can help institutions determine the strengths and weaknesses within their educational programming and target practices needing improvement.

11. Jessica Stepp

Heritage and Museum Sciences Program, Museum of Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas

Expanding the Utility of Collections Management Software for Disaster Preparedness

Abstract – Disaster preparedness is recognized widely as a critical component of museum practice. The Museum of Texas Tech University uses FileMaker Pro to gather disaster preparedness information to produce an all-inclusive disaster plan. The process of planning is equally as important as the resulting plan because staff learn the institution's vulnerabilities, risks, and hazards, and identify response and preparedness measures. To involve as many staff as possible, streamline data collection, and facilitate institutional data analysis, the Museum uses paper and digital FileMaker Pro forms to capture risks, hazards, vulnerabilities, preventive measures, and emergency supplies from collections, administrative, educational, security, custodial, and support group viewpoints. Form completion occurs through three pathways: 1) non-digital; 2) physical to digital; 3) digital only. Project outcomes include efficient collection of information and enabling the production of a comprehensive plan. This data collection approach is applicable to other museums that have access to a customizable, database software.

12. Alyssa Stewart

Heritage and Museum Sciences Program, Museum of Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas

The Red Scare: Deterioration of Red Fabric in Quilts Circa 1850-1865

Abstract – The red fabric found in certain quilts circa 1850-1865 in the Clothing and Textiles Collection of the Museum of Texas Tech University is deteriorating. Objectives for the current research are to determine why it is happening and how to prevent it. Research methodology involves review of publications from other institutions with similar issues, interviews with quilt historians, and testing of fibers from deteriorated fabric. Testing determines whether the fabric in question is single fiber or blended fiber and whether dyes used in subsequent years are different than dyes in cotton manufactured between 1850 and 1865. Results indicate a difference between the dyeing and manufacturing techniques in the production of cotton from 1850-1865 and the previous and subsequent years. The intent is to preserve similar textiles better and to keep this deterioration from happening in other collections. The findings directly benefit curators and collectors in preserving mid-19th century quilts.

13. Alex Van Allen

Heritage and Museum Sciences Program, Museum of Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas

Revision of the Museum of Texas Tech University's Registration Division Policies and Procedures

Abstract – The policies and procedures of the Registration Division of the Museum of Texas Tech University required revisions and updates to provide clear language for the division's staff and students, and improved guidance for the Museum's collecting and exhibit divisions. Registration offered the most suitable division to observe the differences between these divisions due to its status as the Museum's documentation center. It regularly interacted with these other divisions and handled forms. Revisions emphasized the need for clarity, and more specific language for the differences between divisions, establish best practices, and consistent procedures. A thorough review of the specific texts of the two documents was required to determine the optimal arrangement of information within the documents, ensuring that they are complete, up-to-date, and easily accessible. Both documents help the Museum serve its mission and employ best practices for its objects, protecting them and providing an example for other museums to reference.

14. Shinara Weathersby and Sara Breshears

Heritage and Museum Sciences Program, Museum of Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas

So You Want to Know What Your Visitors Are Thinking?

Abstract – One of the most significant issues facing museums today is collecting visitor feedback about exhibits and their overall experience at the museum. Current study

objectives are to identify the most effective data collection and analyzation methodologies and how it can be beneficial to institutions and the community. Three different surveying methods have been used (an electronic survey, a paper survey, and a one-on-one survey) conducted over a two-month period and the resulting feedback has been evaluated using quantitative analysis. Although one type of survey works better than the others, the same survey method may not work as well for other institutions. This study provides the basis for information gathering for other institutions and in areas such as marketing, exhibit design, and visitor experience.