Online Activity #1

L595-Grant Methods for Educators and Librarians
Web-Based Workshop
Fall 2003
Carol L. Tilley, instructor

OK, I'm going to be a bit of a geek and structure this post around the assignment instructions. It's just easier for my poor cluttered brain that way (it'll keep me from going off on tangents, I hope).

1) One-sentence description of organization:
The Mathers Museum of World Cultures at Indiana University strives in all of its activities to further its audiences' understanding of both the diversity of the world's specific cultures and the underlying unity of cultures as a human phenomenon.

2) 3 needs worth addressing (2-3 sentences each)
1. Transportation
The Monroe County Community Schools Corporation budget for discretionary transportation (i.e., for fieldtrips) was slashed for the 2003-2004 school year. In coalition with the Association of Bloomington Museums, the Mathers Museum seeks funding or donated transportation to support class and school visits to member institutions. Our immediate concern is to provide for school field trips and support our local schools; more ambitious goals include establishing a permanent transportation service shared by the museums for any groups wishing to visit, particularly for combined visits to more than one museum in one day.
2. Partnership with the public library for after-hours programming.
The current director of the Monroe County Public Library has a policy against after-hours programming at the library. This has hurt the Young Adult Services department, which previously enjoyed great success with late-night and all-night programs for teens. The Mathers Museum is available as an alternative venue, one which is eager to build collaborative ties with the public library.
3. Support for experimental exhibit
The Mathers Museum has planned an ambitious permanent exhibit, to be called "What Is Culture?" which would encapsulate the museum's mission by presenting the diversity of human experience around the shared unities of "Life Stages" and "Common Needs". A grant proposal to the National Endowment for the Humanities has recently been rejected (with evidence that the judging panel understood neither the mission of the museum, nor the audiences it serves). The museum now seeks alternative support to make this exhibit a reality, based on a smaller exhibition already in progress which solicits community feedback for honing of the concept.

3) For each need: a) Who will benefit from addressing this need? b) What evidence supports the credibility of this need? c) What will help you best address this need?
1. Transportation
a) Teachers and their students in the MCCSC will benefit from solving this problem through the enrichment of curricula and exposure to objects and experiences that can't be reproduced in the classroom. If the full vision to meet this need is met, this benefit will extend to a wide variety of potential visitors from around the state.
b) David Frye of MCCSC and several teachers have already expressed to museum staff the severity of this need and asked for our help. Transportation and parking are a critical and knotty problem for all the member institutions of the Association of Bloomington Museums (ABM), and can be barriers for groups of visitors.
c) Three solutions could address this problem: 1) funds to allow the schools and/or the

ABM to hire bus transportation on an as-needed basis; 2) donation of bus service by a private transportation firm such as Star of Indiana, allowing field trips to be scheduled with the bus company; or 3) donation of an actual bus to be shared by the ABM, along with funds to support its maintenance and a driver (possibly a volunteer driver or a trained museum staff member).

2. Museum-library after-hours partnership

a) Local teens served by the library—and those who haven't attended library events in the past—will benefit from programming aimed not only at their interests but at their body clocks. The museum will benefit by establishing ties with the library for future collaborative projects for all ages, and by reaching an audience that may not have considered the museum as a destination. Similarly, the teens will benefit from the expertise of both library and museum staff.

b) Dana Burton, Young Adult librarian at the Monroe County Public Library, has chafed for some time against the restriction on after-hours programming. She asserts that her ability to serve her young clients has been hindered by this restriction.

c) We will seek financial and volunteer support as well as material donations (such as pizza or prizes from local businesses) to really do this right: to draw teens with activities that will most appeal and enrich.

3. "What Is Culture?" exhibit

a) All of the museum's audiences will benefit from a permanent exhibit clarifying and demonstrating the concept of culture. The university (especially the School of Education and the College of Arts and Sciences) and the K-12 educational system will particularly benefit from this invaluable tool for exposing students to the idea of human unity in diversity, stimulating discussion and supporting further exploration.

b) "Culture" is a notoriously difficult, "fuzzy" concept to teach. Most lay-people in America are more familiar with the idea of "culture" as opera and the ballet (i.e., events that rich and/or "educated/cultured" people go to) than as something all human beings have, even though it can look very different in different places. Most of culture is the things we learn to take for granted about how to live in the world—the assumptions we make about how we should behave and how to interpret other people's behavior. This exhibit will provide an unequaled opportunity to examine and explore those assumptions through concrete encounters with real human artifacts, placed in conceptual and cultural context by accompanying text and illustrations as well as special programs associated with the exhibit.

c) The museum seeks financial support for materials and for staff in order to create this exhibit, promote it, design programs around it, and maintain it over time. The concept for the exhibit allows for rotation of different objects in and out of displays, and the revision of the approach in response to visitor feedback.