

Museum on Main Street
2008 National Planning Conferences
Sharing Best Practices

Best Practices Model: Effective Teacher Training: Education in the Schools, Grades 4-12

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MoMS Tour(s) That You've Coordinated (exhibition and year): Between Fences (2005/6), New Harmonies (2007/8)

How did extra effort(s) in this area come about? Needs identified in the state; among the local hosts, etc.

This program was initiated as a result of my previous teaching experience in the public elementary and middle schools. National lesson plans were keyed to state standards and benchmarks to make them more useful and attractive to teachers. Lesson plans with a Mississippi focus that complimented the national lesson plans were also provided. These were keyed to state standards and benchmarks as well. Teacher workshops were also offered. The intention was to generate increased participation and attendance from school groups and in so doing, improve their knowledge of the exhibit theme(s).

What council resources/expertise were you able to utilize? What partner resources/expertise?

The coordinator is a former public elementary and middle school teacher. MHC also funds an online educational program called MS History Now (mshistory.k12.ms.us) and utilized it's writers in developing lesson plans and presenting teacher workshops. An elementary school teacher and the education director for a university affiliated education and performing arts center we also used in these capacities.

What were the steps involved in implementation?

Recruit lesson plans developers 6 months prior to exhibit opening
Have lesson plans ready for distribution to local site coordinators 3 months prior to opening
Post lesson plans on MHC website 2 months prior to opening
Begin offering teacher workshops 2 months prior to opening
Regular communication with workshop presenters concerning scheduling of workshop locations and times
Teacher workshop offered to teachers at annual history and social studies conference

What were the results?

The majority of the host site locations took advantage of the workshops, generally 4 of 6. Teacher attendance averaged 6 to 10 teachers. Numerous other teachers also accessed and utilized the on-line lesson plans although this was not quantified.

What adjustments (if any) did you make along the way?

On occasion only one of our two workshop teachers were available to present in which case the grades 4-7 and 8-12 presentations were combined

For future exhibits lesson plans will be put in a digital format in which teachers can modify them

What's been the short and long term benefit to the local hosts?

Short term the local host has an increased visitation by school aged children

Long term the children of the community gain a greater knowledge of the subject matter and increased familiarity with the local host site. Students return with family members and word spreads through the community as to the site's desirability as a location for visitation. As a result of the Produce for Victory exhibit (of which I was not a part) the school children from one host town produced a published book of local oral histories.

What's been the short and long term benefit to the state council?

Increased connection with teachers and schools throughout the state and thus increased exposure for MHC and its various programming. Communication with the State Department of Education via the social studies coordinator has also increased.

What advice would you have for other state tour coordinators trying to make a similar impact in this area?

Start early and make sure you have quality/experienced people working on the lesson plans and workshops. Their enthusiasm will spill over to their audiences

Convince your local host sites that this a project is worthwhile, otherwise they will not do a convincing job in "selling it" to the schools (who already have more than enough to do).

Do you have any files, forms, documents or digital images illustrating this component of your MoMS tour(s) that we could post on-line to share with others?

Workshop photos
Lesson plans (CD and notebooks)

Would you be willing to serve as a mentor to other state coordinators, advising them on this topic? If so, please indicate the best way for them to contact you.

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