INTERPRETIVE SKILLS II

LESSON PLAN:6

SESSION TITLE: INDOOR EXHIBITS

SESSION LENGTH:4 hours **ORIG. PREPARED BY:** C. Mayo
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OBJECTIVES: At the end of this session, participants will be able to:

1.List three ways exhibits provide effective interpretation;
2.Explain the major advantages and disadvantages of an indoor exhibit;
3.List the major materials and construction methods and production tools needed for exhibits;
4.Identify the major factors of exhibit design, production and readability;
5.Write and produce a well edited label for an exhibit;
6.List the major ways of mounting labels;
7.Explain the process for obtaining new park exhibits including the HFC production system.

TRAINING AIDS: Blackboard, flip charts, slide projectors, screen

HANDOUTS: See attachments for your choice

Content	Method	Time
I.INTRODUCTION: Provide overview of Session	Class Discussion	30 Min.
A.Exhibit Quality in the NPS 1.Briefly discuss from class experience examples of good and bad exhibits observed in the parks.	Slide Program SWRO	
2.Move to the discussion of the concept of "visual quality".		
VISUAL QUALITY: That which is pleasing to us when viewed. Our perception based upon our upbringing and personal tastes.		
Contrast and compare: Desert vs heavily forested areas, modern art vs impressionism, b/w vs color photography, brick houses vs. wood houses.		

Move to the idea that the National Park Service has a preferred standard of visual quality in its operation. For exhibits the standard is based upon HFC productions. Park personnel are responsible for maintaining this standard when they produce exhibits.

Content	Method	Time
II.INDOOR EXHIBITS A.An interpretive exhibit provokes visitors understanding and appreciation through the display of objects, images and written information about a place, event, or process related to the park theme. The most important aspect of an exhibit is that it have objects, objects, objects. Purposes Education, sharing information, changing attitudes, providing aesthetic experiences, enhance visitor enjoyment and appreciation. Exhibits are environments where individuals learn on many level...both intellectually and emotionally A successful exhibit will give visitors a sense of discovery and insight. It will stimulate visitors to discover something within it of value to see. B.Exhibit Techniques 1.<u>Flat Work</u> (two dimensional exhibits) -a flat panel which contains narration, imagery and illustration and lacks a protective case -Compatible color combinations are important to the success of this type -Coordination between subject matter specialist and artist is important 2.<u>Narrative Panel</u> -Words only and no illustrations or objects 3.<u>Objects</u> -Visible display of artifacts in protected areas -Single objects or collections of similar objects -A few specimens set off by plenty of open space is the most successful	Discussion Handout	1 Hour

Content	Method	Time
4.Dioramas -Three dimensional exhibit whose purpose is to dramatize a scene -Usually in miniature with audio devices -Very expensive to build 5.Models -Representations usually in miniature which show the construction of,or serve as a copy of something -They may be viewed from all sides 6.Types -Equipment Models: reduce the size of machinery, locomotives, automobiles, etc. Used to save exhibit space Architectural Models: are commonly used to illustrate buildings in close detail Topographic Relief Maps: are shown dimensionally to scale C.Advantages: A complete story is told Bring people to the area It can display original objects Time and research can yield a clearer story Valuable objects can be publicly displayed and protected Can bring the out of doors indoors in models Can blowup small objects for clearer understanding They are more or less continuously available It can logically unfold a story Exhibits may be temporary, permanent, or changing Provide many different "handles" or communicate on many different "channels" for learning	Discussion Handouts	Cont'd

Content	Method	Time

D.Disadvantages	Discussion Handout	Cont'd

No dialogue is possible

Some visitors do not like to read exhibit copy

Time consuming to produce

Expensive, occupies great space, mostly permanent

Many times chosen and is the wrong medium

Keep exhibit labels short and to the point, put yourself in the place of the visitors who have their young children in tow.

If ineffective you will have to live with it for a long time

E.Standards and general points
(Many qualities of exhibits can be added here to suit your lesson plan)

Is expressed primarily through objects and pictures.
Avoid 200-300 word labels
Watch that AV does not become and end in itself
Make a scale plan
Place horizon line in photographs at 5'3"
Set up a schedule
The average man is 5'9" tall and the average woman is 5'5" tall. Therefore the eye level for viewing for the man is 5"5" and for the women is 5'.
An adult observes 1" over eye level and 3" below at an average of 24" and 48". Watch for cluttered entrances and monotonous rows.

Visitors will view an exhibit at their own pace and in any order they choose. Elements of the exhibit must be able to stand independently.

Remember brevity-the audience is not a captive one.

III.Material and construction methods.	Discussion Handout	30 Min.

A. Indoor: Limited to those used in producing flat panels that can be used as exhibit labels, signs, or on bulletin boards, and the backdrops they are mounted on.

Content	Method	Time
B. Backdrop: materials panels are mounted on. 1.Commercially built backdrop systems. One system is manufactured by Multiples and features lightweight panels covered by a fuzzy cloth on which materials are fastened with Velcro. 2.Wooden doors. May be varnished or painted. May be pegged or screwed together to form freestanding units. 3.Plywood. may be edged with molding, varnished or painted. May be fastened together with "Clems" to form free-standing units. 4.Plexiglass. Transparency can cause visual confusion if used to build free standing units. 5.Cellotex: A soft fiberboard that can easily be pinned into. May be wrapped with cloth or burlap, stapled on the back surface and framed. C.Panel base materials 1.Gatorboard. Also sold under Artcore and other brand names, this material is a layer of foam, 1/8"-1" thick, sandwiched between two layers of plastic, Because this material is all plastic, warpage is minimal. 2.Foamcore. A layer of foam between two layers of brown or white paper. To prevent warpage, kraft paper must be mounted on the back. 3.Sintra. Manufactured by 3M, this solid plastic material comes in various thicknesses and colors. It can be purchased in 4'x8' sheets.. It will not warp. 4.Illustration and poster board. A paper product that is relatively inexpensive and can be used for making mats for framing photos and for mounting materials. Because it is a paper product, it will warp over time. It is available in a wide variety of colors, surfaces, and thicknesses. 5.Hardboard. Masonite is heavy, and is susceptible to warpage. Tempered hardboard is more durable but must be fastened with epoxy. Untempered is softer and can be fastened with white glue.	Discussion Handout	Cont'd

Content	Method	Time
6.Plexiglass. Strong and lightweight. Susceptible to expansion with temperature changes. Framing plexiglas is an effective method to prevent breakage.	Discussion Handout	Cont'd
D.Attachment: panel base to backdrop		
1.Velcro. Available in a roll of various thickness, or in spots, with sticky tape on the back. Used with backdrops that have fuzzy surfaces.		
2.Rubber cement. If applied to only one of the materials to be fastened, the bond is adjustable until the cement dries and is semi-permanent. If applied to both sides and allowed to dry before attachment, the bond is much stronger and more permanent. In this second procedure, care must be used in positioning the pieces because they cannot be adjusted after they have made contact.		
3.Contact cement. Applied to both of the material, allowed to dry, and then joined. Forms a permanent bond. Available in latex which is easy to clean up with soap and water.		
4.Double backed foam tape. Inexpensive and easy to work with.		
5.Gravity wedge. Wooden pieces attached to backdrop and panel base interlock. Allows easy installation and removal.		
E.Panel information		
1.Photographs a.Black and white b.Color c.Double weight mural paper with matte finish is very durable		
2.Line drawings		
3.Text a.Typeset b.Typewritten with large size type c.Calligraphy, or hand lettered d.Kroy or machine produced lettering on clear tape e. Leroy lettering set		
4.Silk screened. May include text and line drawings.		

Content	Method	Time
F.Attachment: panel information to panel base. Panel information is usually produced on paper or photographic material. It is attached to the panel base using the following materials.	Discussion Handout	Cont'd
1.Dry mounting press		
2.Cold mounting with adhesive sheet		
3. Spray adhesives		
4.White glue. Elmers and others only works on porous surfaced materials.		
5.Rubber cement		
6.Contact cement		
7.Double faced tape		
G.Tools		
1.Major tools needed for installation and minor repairs.(see handouts)		
IV.DESIGN-PRODUCTION-READABILITY	Slide Program Discussion	30 in.
The following exhibit development outline will help you define an exhibit's information and plan its content and overall design.		
1.Evaluation (before production) a.Why is the exhibit being done?		
b.Why is the exhibit the best medium to convey your message?		
c.How can other media reinforce your message?		
2.Basic thematic considerations		
a.What is the suggested title of the exhibit.		
b.What is the theme or subject?		
c.Who is the target audience?		
d.What do you want the visitors to learn?		
e.What questions do you want the visitors to be able to answer after they view the exhibit.		
f.What obstacles are there in communicating the main objectives?		

Content	Method	Time
3.Content and design consideration	Slide Program Discussion	Cont'd
a.Develop a complete researched script for the exhibit.		
b.Develop a list of objects and specimens that will be used to express your ideas.		
c.Develop a list of support materials that will reinforce your theme and the objects i.e. graphs, maps, and charts etc.		
d.Determine if there are any natural progression for your information to be displayed.		
e.Make suggestions for format within the exhibit.		
f.Make suggestions for viewer involvement.		
g.Suggest space requirements or limitations		
h.Note other physical restraints, weight, height etc.		
i.Determine viewer time constraints if any		
j.Determine all of you program components that will reinforce the actual exhibit		
k.Lighting		
l.Legibility-consider size and style of letters used.		
4.Exhibit Content		
a.Consider and incorporate your visitors previous knowledge on the subject.		
b.Plan a general introductory panel to the area/		
c.Plan a conclusion panel or area to summarize the exhibit.		
d.Write the exhibit story with a clearly defined script with beginning and end.		
e.Design the exhibit with a clear internal organization.		
f.Reinforce the concepts of the exhibit with repetition.		

Content	Method	Time
g.Confirm all facts with experts. h.Key labels are useful for focusing the main points in the various areas of an exhibit. i.All the type and length of key labels should be the same.	Slide Program Discussion	Count.
V.<u>WRITE AND PRODUCE A LABEL</u> A.Create a label to replace a label in the park or to solve a park problem. This label will be completed to the point that it can be hung in the park upon return. References in this lesson plan on labels will provide the step by step method. STUDENTS WHO BRING EXAMPLES OF POOR LABELS TO BE REVISED, CAN ALSO BE USED. 1.Supplies (create your own list for the exercise) B.Bring together the necessary tools and do research. C.Write draft-visualize the object(s) that will be written about write down own thoughts. Then do research to supplement your thoughts. Think of the following while writing draft; first sentence needs to be grabber, be specific and not general, less is better then more, use verbs/nouns as much as possible and not adjectives. D.Edit E.Ready for production(use handouts for type size and other production needs)	Handout	30 Min. to 1 Hour
VI.<u>WAYS OF MOUNTING LABELS</u> A.Importance of good mounting B.Dry mounting 1.Tools-dry mounting press, tack iron 2.Paper-b/w and color C.Wet mounting D.Types of material to mount to 1.Masonite 2.Illustration board 3.Formica 4.Other hard surface E.Types of bonding materials.		

Content	Method	Time
VII. EXHIBIT PRODUCTION CHOICES After the labels or signs are completed the processes of getting the work converted into final park products suitable for long life should be discussed. Some choices include: A. In-house production without the blessing of Harpers Ferry Center is not recommended. You can run into problems with maintenance and replacement of exhibits. Care should be made to touch base with HFC on exhibits matters. B. In-house production with the blessing and review by the Harpers Ferry Center using the blanket purchase order contract as set up by the center for production. (best possibility) C. Production of a graphic layout for conversion by HFC into a finished product. D. Complete HFC production with park input. VIII. HOW TO WORK WITH HARPERS FERRY CENTER The following is a discussion of the flow of events that creates an exhibit whether indoors or outdoors from Harpers Ferry Center. 1. Interpretive Prospectus-This document can be written by HFC or the park and defines themes and location for exhibits. It outlines the scope of interpretive medial 2. 10-238-This document is created by the park and it will cause the plan or portion of the plan to be placed in the system for funding. 3. Setting of the park priority. 4. Regional priorities-Priorities for each region are set by the Regional Directors for each region and they in turn are set in priority order. 5. HFC priority-Here HFC decides upon several products nation wide for the upcoming year or years	Handouts Discussion Handout of Exhibit Plan	30 Min.

Content	Method	Time
6.Funding-Funding for the projects that were described in the 10-238's is provided in two stages. The first kind of money is planning money and upon completion of funding the second stage provides funding for production. Normal time to produce a large project of 30-40 exhibits will take 2-3 years after funding. In this process speed is based upon resources and degree involvement of the park. The clearer the projects, the greater the amounts of material, etc,. the greater chance for speedy success. Normally exhibits are designed on a replacement cycle of approximately 20 years, but in reality the replacement cycle is probably closer to 20 years.	Discussion Handouts	Count.
References <u>Good show! A Practical Guide for Temporary Exhibitions.</u> Lothar P. Wittenborg, Washington D.C., Smithsonian Institution, 1981 This book is the best source for information about setting up temporary exhibitions. It gives clear, detailed information about how to plan an exhibition, buy or build panels and cases, and covers other topics such as handicapped access and security. <u>American Association of State and Local History Technical Leaflet Series</u> "Exhibit Labels: A Consideration of Content, "Leaflet #60. Don W. Wilson and Dennis Median, History News, Vol. 4. April 1972. This eight page booklet explain a philosophy of label writing and gives examples of how labels can be rewritten to be more effective. "Designing Your Exhibits: Seven Ways to Look at Artifacts," Leaflet #92, Fred Schroeder, History News, Vol. 31, No. 11, November, 1976. The seven ways explained in this eight page booklet should stimulate new ideas that can be used in planning and designing an exhibit. <u>Making Exhibit Labels, A Step by Step Guide,</u> Beverly Serrell, AASLH, Nashville, Tennessee, 1983		