

Will our Exhibit Work?

Self-assessment

Model focused revision for students, showing them how you would revise an exhibit (perhaps a professional exhibit, an anonymous example from a previous year, or a school museum at kidcurators.com.) Begin by choosing work that needs revision on a single rubric trait (or aspect of quality). Then have students engage in a guided practice of exhibit revision—ask them to brainstorm advice for an (anonymous) exhibit developer on how to improve his or her work. In pairs, they revise the work using their own advice. You may ask them to write a letter to the creator of the sample, suggesting what could be done to make it stronger. Finally, students revise their own exhibit using the Exhibit Design Rubric

Formative Evaluation

Before exhibit construction, museum professionals conduct formative evaluations on prototype exhibits to assess visitor responses to their designs. Similarly, students can conduct formative evaluation of their mock-ups or drawings by asking for feedback from peers, other children in the school, parents, or other adults. Based on what students learn from this feedback, they may brainstorm alternative, better ways to design their exhibits.

The following questions, developed by Beverly Serrell (Exhibit Labels, 1996, page 141), might be useful during the formative evaluation process.

- Do they like it?
- Do they think it is fun?
- Do they understand it?
- Do they find it meaningful?
- Does their understanding coincide with (or at least not contradict) the stated communication objectives for the element?
- Does it give the user a sense of discovery, wonder, or “wow”?