

Use Exhibition to Learn More

Before opening your school museum, consider using the completed displays in your school museum as a teaching tool to further student learning. This is motivating to students—it is unusual for their work to become the “text” for classroom activities. You might base a lesson on Harmin’s Action Lesson Plan (see *Learning on Display*, chapter 5). Using this strategy the teacher delivers a very short lecture using the exhibit as a visual aid. Regular pauses in the “lecture” allow students time to write their personal reactions, summaries, or questions. The teacher then resumes speaking for several minutes, followed by another pause, and so on. Harmin suggests “augmenting lectures with lots of visuals...”—this is an easy task with the exhibit close at hand! After the lecture, students might pair up to compare notes and discuss questions. Younger students can write, draw, or just think before sharing their summary, question, or reaction with a partner. This sharing might be followed by a large- group discussion.

SOURCE: Harmin, Merrill, 1994, *Inspiring Active Learning: A Handbook for teachers*, ASCD.

Other interactive strategies using the exhibition as a teaching tool:

Graffiti Brainstorm:

- Post each Focus Question on chart paper and affix to the wall near the corresponding exhibit (to be taken down before your museum opens!).
- Divide students into random small groups—the same number of groups as Focus Questions/exhibits, ideally, groups of 3-4 students—and assign each group to an exhibit.
- Each group 1) reviews the exhibit, 2) discusses the answer to the focus question, and 3) writes their answer—or several key points--on the poster. NOTE: Provide each group with a different color marker.
- After several minutes the team moves to the next Focus Question and repeats the process (continue until each team moves to all Focus Questions.)
- Have teams review the poster they began with to 1) read all information, 2) circle key points and 3) report key points out to the full group.

Exhibit Jigsaw:

- Divide students into random small groups—the same number of groups as Focus Questions/exhibits, ideally, groups of 3-4 students—and assign each group to an exhibit.
- Have each student study one component of the exhibit (a text panel and related object/s.) As students study their individual component they are to 1) prepare a summary to share with their team, and 2) connect their exhibit component to the Focus Question.
- Students report their findings to teammates.
- Rotate to other exhibits as time allows.

Give One Get One:

- Ask students to create a grid of 9 squares on a blank piece of paper. (Tic-Tac-Toe style)
- Divide students randomly among the exhibits so that each student has one exhibit to study.
- Provide time for students to examine the exhibit they are studying and write three things they learned from the exhibit. They are to write each item in a different square of their Tic-Tac-Toe grid, filling three of their squares. *"I learned..."*
- Students find a peer from another team and 1) share one of their ideas (which their partner will write in an empty square of their grid) and 2) get one idea from their partner.
- When complete, each student in the pair finds a new partner and repeats the process.

Summary Ball (or use an object as a talking piece)

- Divide students into random small groups—the same number of groups as Focus Questions/exhibits, ideally, groups of 3-4 students—and assign each group to an exhibit.
- Give students time to read and experience the exhibit. Ask them to try to remember several facts, concepts, or key ideas from the exhibit for the summary ball activity.
- Each group has a ball that they toss in the circle. One student begins by tossing the ball to any student.
- The student who catches the ball has 5 seconds to state any fact, concept, or key idea from the exhibit. S/he tosses the ball to someone else who states something new.
- If student can't think of anything in 5 seconds then s/he is out.
- Keep going until there is only 1 (or 2) students left.
- Rotate to other exhibits, as time allows.
- NOTE: A variation of this activity is to use the ball as a talking object and simply have students share a key fact, concept, or skill they learned from the exhibit.

Save the Last Word for Me

- Divide students into random small groups—the same number of groups as Focus Questions/exhibits, ideally, groups of 3-4 students—and assign each group to an exhibit.
 - Give students time to read and experience the exhibit so that they have identified two or more sentences from the label copy that they'd like to discuss.
 - One member of each group reads aloud a line that s/he identified.
 - Each of the others in the group will react (1 minute each) by agreeing, refuting, supporting, clarifying, commenting, or questioning.
 - After everyone has had a chance to respond, the originator of the line offers commentary, getting the "last word." (3 minutes)
 - Rotate to the next person...
 - Presenting Person reads his/her line
 - Others in the group react—Agree, refute, support, clarify, comment or question (1 min per person)
 - Presenting Person offers commentary, getting the "last word" (3 minutes)
- NOTE: Teacher may want to keep time for the full group so that the process moves briskly.

The Most Important Thing...

- Divide students into random small groups—the same number of groups as Focus Questions/exhibits, ideally, groups of 3-4 students—and assign each group to an exhibit.
- Give students time to read and experience the exhibit so that they have identified three important ideas from the exhibit to complete this sentence:
 - o --, and --- are important ideas in this exhibit, but the *most* important thing I learned is ____
- 2 minute discussion in the small group
- Move to the next person
- Rotate to other exhibits, as time allows.

NOTE: Visit the National School Reform Faculty website for protocols like those above, which can be modified for use with students throughout the school museum project - <http://www.nsrffharmony.org/free-resources/protocols>