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How to Develop Effective Teacher Workshops

Peter S. O'Connell

If collections are the heart of museums, education—the commitment to presenting objects and ideas in an informative and stimulating way—is the spirit. As the American Association of Museums notes in its report, *Museums for a New Century,* American museums should communicate ideas, impart knowledge, encourage curiosity, and promote aesthetic sensibility. Museums and historical societies, then, should count among their most important functions the education of their many publics—children, teachers, families, and visitors.

Historical organizations can reach students most effectively by working with schools to help them teach an appreciation of the value of historic structures, a knowledge of the history of community and state, and the skills of "historical literacy" such as the ability to read objects and buildings, to use primary documents, and to map neighborhoods.

I suggest museums consider developing teacher workshops as a good way to begin long-term, successful museum-school collaboration. There are several types of teacher workshops, and the type you offer will depend on how far along you are in developing a new education program. For example, you might organize a workshop to solicit advice from teachers for a new program your museum wants to develop for schoolchildren. Once the program has been established, you and the teachers who helped you might offer another workshop to other teachers on the new program, one that trains them in the use of new sources and techniques. Some teacher workshops emphasize historical content and usually involve the presentation of historical information in didactic form—through a lecture, movie, or dramatic play, for example. Still others teach the techniques of historical inquiry by focusing on the methodology of oral history and archaeology or by acquainting teachers with the techniques of "reading" objects, spaces, or buildings. Most workshops include all of these objectives in some measure. But when museum staff members attempt to accomplish too much—when they fail to define realistic priorities—teachers feel overloaded, rushed, confused, and frustrated.

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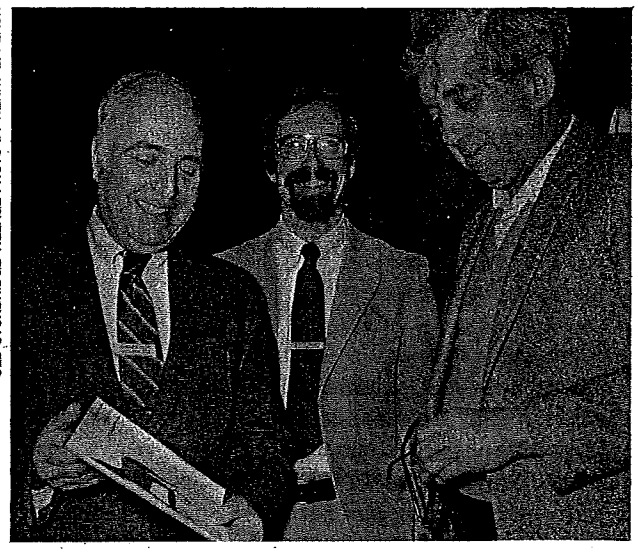
Defining the terms

What constitutes good museum-school collaboration? First, to work together, both museums and schools must speak the same language. Though both use such terms as "history," "exhibit," "curriculum," "object," "learning," "student," "teacher," and "teaching," and both assume that the words carry the same meanings, in reality a curator defines learning and teaching differently than a fifth-grade teacher.

When a curator develops workshops and educational programs, he or she naturally uses slide-lectures, tours, and other means familiar to museum

OLD STURBRIDGE VILLAGE PHOTO BY HENRY E. PEACH



Effective museum-school collaboration involves museum administrators, educators, and principals. Left to right, Crawford Lincoln, president of Old Sturbridge Village, Peter O'Connell, director of museum education at Old Sturbridge Village, and Al Radzik, principal of Elm Park Community School in Worcester, Massachusetts.

professionals. Curators often assume that teachers need the historical content museums offer but can develop their own teaching activities. Teachers see things differently. They think first in terms of practical classroom activities, and they rank intellectual stimulation lower in priority.

Good museum-school collaboration brings museum staff and teachers together in an atmosphere of mutual respect to learn about one another's "culture" in order to accomplish the goal they hold in common—the effective education of children.

Program research and planning

How does a museum begin developing a successful education program? Often a museum is tempted to pull together a program quickly, whip up a promotional brochure, send it to area schools, and offer a teacher workshop. As a museum educator, you should avoid such a temptation. First, you need to secure the support of your museum's board and administration and make sure they allocate sufficient financial resources. Often a museum's education programs begin with grant funds; they are not part of the museum's operating budget. But what happens when the grant period ends? Too often administrators fail to support education programs fully, but do not make that clear until the grants run out. Both the museum's director and its educator should analyze how the education program will become part of the institution's operating budget, supported like other museum programs and services by fees, general funds, and grants.

To gain the support of the society's board and director, you should demonstrate how the new program ties into the museum's mission statement, explain how the program helps the museum fill its educational obligations, and provide information about education programs in similar—and perhaps competing—organizations. And finally, you can remind the board that sucessful programs for schoolchildren often lead to increased family visitation.

Once you have the proper support, you can begin developing the program itself. Since the strengths of the museum's collections and archives define the possibilities of education programs, you must assess the collections. This analysis helps you map out the boundaries of your teacher workshops. Good workshops assume that some historical content and source materials have been refined from the raw ore of the collections. You must also decide whether school groups will be staff-led or teacher-led, since the decision affects the kind of training teachers need before they bring their students to the museum. Finally, you must "research the market." Begin by gathering information about local schools and talking with their administrators and teachers. In states with statewide curricula, ask for copies of curriculum guidelines. In other states, look for the guidelines produced by local school systems. A school's published guidelines, however, do not necessarily represent what goes on in the classroom. Only the teachers and administrators themselves can tell you that.

When you have completed the initial planning, you will be ready to choose program topics that draw on the museum's strengths and that meet teachers' needs.

Regardless of the topics, your education programs should include: classroom activities that tie into the curriculum and prepare students for their visit to the museum; a museum visit that includes activities that cannot be done in the classroom and that teaches skills as well as historical information; and postvisit activities that allow students opportunities to put their new skills and knowledge to use.

As you tentatively select historical sources and design teaching sequences, you will need some familiarity with curriculum theory and terms. If you lack such knowledge, consider hiring a curriculum consultant.

A workshop for teacher advisors

Once you have worked up some tentative programs, you might ask administrators and curriculum coordinators in the local schools for their reactions. Working through administrators is particularly important because you involve them at the outset, and they, in turn, are more likely to support your program. Get them to identify some teachers who would pilot the program, evaluate it, and help to revise it.

In implementing a workshop for teacher advisors, you should avoid viewing yourself as simply a content specialist who selects historical sources, trains teachers through lectures, and assumes teachers themselves can design teaching activities in which students learn complex historical ideas.

Begin the workshop with some discussion about the relevance of the program's topic to the teachers' curricula and to student interests and needs. Once you all agree on the topic, you can practice the program itself on the teachers. Playing the roles their own students will play, they learn new historical information and understand more clearly if a particular set of resources and activities will work for their students. The teachers can then tell you how to improve the activities, resources, formats, or teaching sequences.

Such an approach requires the skills and knowledge of a historian, a classroom teacher, a museum teacher, and a program planner – a person who can translate traditional historical methods and materials into exciting, learning experiences for students. Few historians or teachers can do it – it is the particular skill of museum educators.

Such planning workshops may vary in length from two hours to a few days, although they do not necessarily occur all in one sitting. Smaller museums may offer two-hour workshops, perhaps in a series. Many museums include behind-the-scenes activities to help the teachers feel more part of the museum.

From planning to dissemination

Now that you – with the help of teachers and administrators – have developed and piloted programs, you are ready to offer them to other teachers in a different kind of workshop.

Think of yourself as a salesperson for a product you believe in passionately. To succeed, you need to make teachers feel welcome and comfortable. You must show them that you are well organized before they ever arrive at your workshop. Send a letter to teachers who have registered for the workshop to let them know you are looking forward to working with them, to confirm the program dates, and to tell them the starting and ending time for the workshop. Enclose directions to your museum with information about parking, lunch, and any other details. For example, at Old Sturbridge Village, we tell workshop participants to dress comfortably, to pay attention to the weather forecast, and to wear shoes appropriate to our sandy pathways.

The tone of the workshop is very important. Teachers "read" people and spaces very well. Make sure that your space is comfortable, that restrooms are easy to find, that you welcome them with refreshments – coffee, tea, and breakfast snacks. Provide name tags and a schedule for the day. Work hard on your introduction to the workshop. The tags and schedule let them know you are organized, and

OLD STURBRIDGE VILLAGE PHOTO BY HENRY E. PEACH

As Anatole France explains in *The Colonial Williamsburg Interpreter,* "It is enough to open minds; do not overload them. If there is some good inflammable stuff, it will catch fire."

the introduction tells them that you are in tune with their needs and interests. Teachers look for opportunities to participate, for session topics that apply to their classes, and for workshops that have some breaks in the day. For many people, the social interaction among the participants may well determine the success of the workshop. Others may worry about lunch arrangements.

If the workshop lasts only one day or less, you must avoid the temptation to teach teachers everything at once. Anatole France explains in *The Colonial Williamsburg Interpreter: A Handbook:* "Do not try to satisfy your vanity by teaching a great many things. Awaken people's curiosity. It is enough to open minds; do not overload them. Put there just a spark. If there is some good inflammable stuff, it will catch fire."

In workshops at Old Sturbridge Village, our staff takes on the role of teachers and casts the teachers as students. We call this "model teaching": The teachers explore the materials and activities much as their students will, except that, for the teachers, the activities are shortened or "telescoped" because of limited time. The teachers experience a great deal of fun and satisfaction because the sources and activities are stimulating and relevant to their teaching needs. Of course, the staff and teachers discuss how the activities work with students.

We set aside some time in the workshop to go over logistical procedures with the teachers, so they feel well organized in bringing students to the museum and so our museum staff feel prepared to go to their classrooms.

If teachers in your workshop go through the program much as students will, they will learn a substantial amount of history and go away wanting more. And if teachers take away instructional materials, they will teach themselves more history.

A sample workshop

At Old Sturbridge Village we have developed an upper elementary curriculum unit that requires twenty class periods of instruction and a one-day field study at the museum. A workshop for teachers can last from one to five days, depending upon the school system's objectives, but generally, we attempt to familiarize teachers with the program in a one- or two-day workshop.

In a typical one day workshop, the sequence of activities might be as follows:

9:00	Coffee and Registration and Review of the Schedule
9:15	Activity: Your Own Family Life in the Twentieth Century

The first activity provides workshop participants with a chance to get to know one another and to develop concepts that form the framework for comparing family life in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. We have had success with several activities. We might ask each participant to recall from memory a room from a childhood home and to focus on the relationships of people and objects in the room; or, we might ask each participant to make a quick floor plan of his or her house and to list the activities that occur in each room.

After processing the activity, the workshop leader establishes an overarching "focusing question" that

guides the teachers' inquiry during the workshop (and during the teaching of the curriculum unit with their students). Several focusing questions work well, but a good example might be: "What factors affect the structure and functions of families in the early nineteenth century and in the early twentieth century?" The question suggests more specific questions that need to be asked before answers to the broader question can be found.

9:45 Finding Yourself in the Past: Taking on New Identities as Members of 1830's Families

In this section of the workshop, we introduce a strategy that helps students learn in our museum. We assign participants the identities of members of 1830's families and instruct them to explore what their lives would have been like if they had lived in Sturbridge back then. The activity provides the teachers a comfortable way to learn about family history – through the eyes of an individual. There is something intriguing about another person's life. The members of the same family have a new basis of socializing and turn to the museum resources with a sense of interest and anticipation.

Teachers are asked to read a family census card and to introduce themselves in their new identities. The staff asks them to identify questions they would like to explore if they were to describe a day in their characters' lives in 1830 by the end of the workshop. They also begin to make observations about average family size, life expectancy, age at marriage, and length of childbearing years. In addition to assigning the roles, we give teachers edited primary sources, such as diaries or recollections, of people like their new 1830's selves.

10:30 - 2:00 Research in Museum Exhibits, Individual Planning Meetings and Lunch

We then send teachers to visit museum exhibits and to gather information. Before they set out, however, we give them some follow-up activities they can engage in (or engage their students in) after the field study. Having the follow-up activities in hand at the outset, the teachers know better what historical information they need. Such knowledge helps structure their unguided visits into the museum and maintains the focus of the workshop. Since they are on their own, the teachers feel in charge of their learning. They make a commitment to the process.

While some workshop participants explore the museum, others meet with an OSV staff member to plan their specific teaching unit. We ask about their teaching objectives, the length of the unit they have planned, and other factors. In this thirty- to forty-five-minute conversation, we try to help them structure a basic teaching sequence using already developed OSV curriculum resources, including an orientation slide program, role cards, and diaries, and teaching strategies such as object reading, inventorying the students' rooms, keeping a three-day diary, and role playing an 1830's school lesson. We try to be very specific and practical, to help teachers focus on their primary objective (teachers sometimes want to do it all, too), and to consider what will work with the students.

We must remember that we cannot promise too much in an effort to please the teacher. We have to stay within our capabilities and offer a program that will not strain our limited time and materials. It is better to do a limited program well than to fail at an overly ambitious one. If both partners, museum educator and classroom teacher, see this conversation as a beginning of a longer relationship, it is easier to limit the expectations.

Because we want to familiarize teachers with a curriculum on family, and more particularly to help them better understand what will happen when their students visit the museum, we sometimes ask them to do the same short hands-on activity we will eventually ask their students to do on their field study to Old Sturbridge Village. The activities are fun, but they also demonstrate students' needs for concrete activity in relation to the more abstract structure of the inquiry.

OLD STURBRIDGE VILLAGE PHOTO BY ROBERT S. ARNOLD

Active participation is an essential part of successful teacher workshops.

2:15 - 3:00 Summary of Field Study and Workshop Wrap-up

After the hands-on activity, the teachers discuss what they have learned about family life in the nineteenth century. They do not actually do the classroom follow-up activities they were assigned at the outset of the field study, but as a group they discuss the conclusions they might have reached if they had. The museum staff then reviews the remaining sources and activity materials in the kit and the teacher's curriculum guide.

Each of the activities builds on skills and learning accomplished in previous activities. By organizing the workshop around questions, we shift the focus of inquiry from the staff to the teachers and increase their sense of participation. Thus the museum staff members cast themselves as resource people to the teachers as teachers seek the answers to questions they have identified. The workshop experience is open-ended, relevant, and participatory. Teachers marvel at how much they have learned and appreciate the museum staff's ability to "teach."

We emphasize social interaction. Teachers learn a great deal from one another and draw substantial satisfaction and support from learning something new together. The museum staff becomes supportive of the teachers and grows to recognize their feelings of insecurity in a museum environment.

Such a workshop may seem overly ambitious for the small historical organizations. A substantial amount of the workshop time, however, involves teachers visiting museum exhibits and planning their class visits to the museum. If we left the visits out or shortened them, the workshop would last approximately two to three hours. Versions of the workshop have worked well as after school in-service workshops and as one-and-one-half hour workshops at teacher conferences.

Workshops on history and historical inquiry

Once your planning and dissemination workshops are in place, you might consider offering workshops that have as their primary objective strengthening teachers' understanding of historical topics or introducing them to the techniques of historical inquiry.

Formats for these kinds of workshops range from two-hour afternoon workshops to five-day or longer conferences and seminars. A museum can organize such a seminar or workshop easily and offer it frequently to the general public – and that sometimes presents problems. The museum might be tempted to invite teachers to participate in a program modeled after one of its public seminars even before it has developed education programs. In most cases, the museum finds it has made a mistake in doing so. Many teachers already think historical museums favor adults more than students and rely too heavily on lectures and other didactic teaching methods. Workshops on historical technique usually succeed best after a museum has already worked with a school or in response to a school-initiated request such as, for example, one to help develop an archaeology unit for the fourth grade.

Short workshops

Teacher in-service and similar workshops are infa-

mous because of the difficulty of doing them well. Usually short in length, they often, of necessity, take place in rooms ill-suited to teaching and involve large numbers of teachers, many times from different grade levels and disciplines. On the other hand, such workshops offer museum staff a wonderful opportunity to reach audiences that are otherwise difficult to reach. It is unrealistic to think that museums can turn on everyone in the workshop to the learning potential of museums, but even if the museum reaches only a handful of teachers, it has made important progress.

Three strategies help make the workshops successful. First, organize materials so that teachers work in small groups and can interact with one another. Second, provide plenty of opportunities for teachers to participate in short, snappy activities that have a clear application to the classroom. And third, link historical primary sources and inquiry techniques to the teachers' own experiences or to the communities in which they teach. Strategies involving role playing, problem solving, and the use of objects usually succeed.

Suppose, for example, that a school asks you to do a two-hour, after-school workshop on map skills – not the most scintillating topic for an afternoon in-service workshop. Rather than offering show-and-tell about historical cartography (even though it might be your favorite subject), try to find a way of drawing on people's personal experiences.

Begin the workshop by having the teachers draw maps of the neighborhoods in which they were children, including all of the natural and man-made features of importance to them. They will have a great deal of fun doing the activity. Using their maps, develop certain concepts with them such as central place, neighborhood, boundaries, and cardinal directions. After the map-drawing exercise, you might introduce a series of historical maps of the community and diaries that describe places depicted on the map. Then begin to explore what students can learn from the sources using techniques of historical inquiry. Even teachers of subjects other than history become engrossed, particularly with the historical maps of their own communities. Most teachers are genuinely surprised and pleased at what they have learned in a short time.

Intensive workshops

Some museums, in cooperation with college history and education departments and with other museums, have successfully offered intensive, week-long workshops for teachers. Longer workshops are ambitious undertakings because the logistics and personal interactions are more complicated. For several years Old Sturbridge Village has offered an intensive two- or three-week summer institute in which teachers learn the social history of the early nineteenth century and work with staff to design curriculum units that they then pilot with their students. They return to ten follow-up workshops during the school year for additional training in historical content and curriculum development.

This kind of workshop results in firm friendships among teachers and museum staff and in a high degree of commitment to field-based teaching techniques. Many of the teachers assist museum staff in offering workshops for other teachers in their schools and at professional conferences. When such workshops are done well, they are extremely effec-

OLD STURBRIDGE VILLAGE PHOTO BY ROBERT S. ARNOLD

Good museum-school collaboration brings museum staff and teachers together in an atmosphere of mutual respect.

tive and result in ongoing museum-school collaborations.

Recruiting teachers

Most museums have experienced the frustration of organizing and advertising a workshop only to attract a handful of teachers or none at all. Such an experience makes one cautious, somewhat fearful, and sometimes angry. But it takes time, patience, and personal contacts to gain the kind of access to teachers and administrators that you need in order to work with schools effectively. Most elementary principals are willing to talk with historical society representatives about possible programs, but they are cautious about committing their time and money. A principal is a "gatekeeper" of formal access to the school system. The principal can offer financial assistance through the budget process, recruit teachers to participate, advocate the project to the superintendent and school board, and provide program continuity when teachers leave or change grade levels.

A curriculum coordinator can also help you, but curriculum coordinators have different authority in different school systems. In smaller schools, an assistant superintendent may have responsibility for the curriculum and may have substantial power to influence principals, teachers, and the superintendent. In larger systems, the curriculum coordinator may have less authority and may have to persuade principals to participate in your program. You need the principal's support if a program is to be integrated into the school program.

Once you are ready to expand your program, you might conduct workshops at professional meetings of principals and offer to conduct programs as part of regularly scheduled teacher in-service programs. Principals are always looking for interesting presentations for their in-service programs.

At Old Sturbridge Village, we offer an annual administrators' day to which principals and their families are invited free of charge. Administrators' days are scheduled on Sunday afternoons. We send out invitations and request reservations. About 300 people attend. We give the families an information packet about our programs. They participate in hands-on activities, visit museum exhibits, and attend an informal reception. At the reception, we make a few points about the value of field study for students and invite the administrators to talk with us about workshops for teachers, field studies for their students, and curriculum materials for their classrooms. Over the course of several years, we have met hundreds of administrators we might not have met otherwise.

Museum educators should subscribe to the newsletter of the regional principals' associations just to monitor the locations of meetings, the discussion of issues, and new directions in curriculum development. You will find this general information invaluable when you talk to administrators.

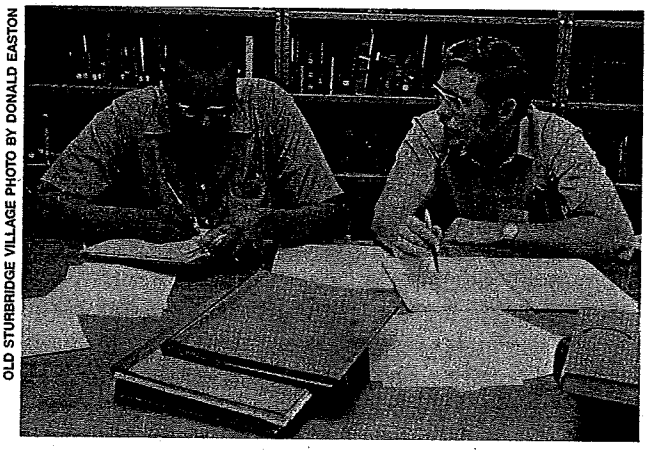
Overcoming barriers to collaboration

It is very easy to become frustrated because teachers do not attend your workshops or take advantage of your education programs. The reason may be ignorance or laziness, but you should consider other possibilities.

While workshop publicity and a convenient, accessible time and place significantly affect teachers' decisions to attend a workshop, so do their attitudes. Unless teachers are predisposed to use museum resources and unless they are already interested in a problem that your museum program helps to solve, they will never even notice your program and workshop announcement. Teachers don't necessarily decide not to participate – they don't even consider it.

In many cases, past museum experiences haunt teachers. One teacher recalled: "I took my kids to that museum ten years ago, and staff was rude to the kids and to me. I'll never take my kids there again." The museum brochures he receives only remind him of his bad experience.

Many teachers feel that museums have more rules than collections and more interest in adults than in



OLD STURBRIDGE VILLAGE PHOTO BY DONALD EASTON

At the workshops, teachers transform historical resources into educational sources for classroom use.

kids. They feel that exhibits and programs are developed by curators and researchers who know their subject well, but who have little understanding of or interest in the way children learn. Teachers swap stories about museum programs to which they took their students because the topic was interesting and relevant to their curriculum, but which turned out to consist of boring lecture tours. Many teachers note that while museums say they are interested in collaborating with teachers, the staff rarely involves teachers in the planning. Jane Moriarty, a Scarsdale, New York, teacher says: "Many museum education staff members seem to come with their own agendas—ones that are inflexible to meet the needs of the teachers. I have found that when the museum education person . . . projects a friendly 'here's what I have to offer, how can I help you approach?' the teachers will respond positively."

Teachers explain that everyone has an agenda for them—they are under tremendous pressure to turn imperfect children into perfect students. One teacher said that elementary teachers have "twenty-five bosses, not including their principals. While we value museums, an all-day field trip to a historical organization is only 1/180 of a teacher's school year." Says Bob Fulton, a Mansfield, Connecticut, elementary teacher: "The number and variety of subjects to be covered, and the resulting preparation load can discourage teachers in a self-contained setting from looking for something new to try . . . . Many teachers view the opportunity to expand their knowledge as a challenge, but others see themselves already barely able to keep up with the demands of the existing curriculum."

Unfortunately, history and social studies are not high priorities in schools when the public worries about reading, math, and writing scores. National studies show that the amount of time spent teaching social studies in the elementary school has declined. These same studies show that teachers do not feel as qualified to teach social studies as they do other subjects. Students report that they do not like social studies very much and are often bored.

Many teachers find the skill-and-drill approach boring and respond appreciatively to interdisciplinary programs that address both skills and historical content. The staff at Old Sturbridge Village, recognizing that reading and writing have higher priority than social studies in the middle grades, developed a program called "Reading and Writing and History," which uses social studies content to teach skills. Teachers and administrators have responded well.

When a museum can engage a few teachers, the word begins to spread to others. Where once they might have swapped negative stories with their colleages, enthusiastic teachers now positively promote the museum.

Finally, teachers who had bad experiences can be pleasantly surprised if a new curator of education asks them to help advise the staff on the development of new and better education programs.

On the positive side, teachers report that good museum field trips and the accompanying classroom activities are among the most popular and memorable experiences for both teachers and kids. Parents help raise funds for such trips, and they quickly

become a tradition in the school. One teacher asked her eleventh-graders to bring in the materials they had used in their Old Sturbridge Village fifth-grade unit. Even she was surprised when nearly every student brought in the materials.

Most teachers visit a museum no more than once a year. Thus, the museum must think in terms of annual or semiannual cycles. Think, too, about the significance of reaching only a few teachers in the first attempt. One teacher can open up avenues to other teachers—to teachers in the same schools, to friends in other schools, to an administrator, to other teachers in professional organizations, and to funding agencies. One teacher worked with OSV staff to develop a curriculum unit, set up an in-service workshop at her school, presented a workshop with OSV staff at the regional social studies conference for about fifty teachers, and linked OSV staff to the parochial diocesan office, thus leading to a professional day workshop for twenty teachers. Here are some helpful hints in reaching teachers:

•Contact teachers who already bring students to your institution or whose schools use your programs. Ask each teacher to give you the names of two to five teachers who might be interested in being on your mailing list.

•Contact your state department of education. At the very least, the department has mailing lists and perhaps a newsletter that can help you reach principals and teachers. The department of education sets curriculum requirements and may have a social studies unit that will help you organize workshops. If so, the department staff members are probably active in social studies professional organizations and in curriculum development. Ask for their help in offering workshops and for their support in submitting grant proposals.

•Join local and regional professional teacher groups (National Council for the Social Studies, Reading Teachers Association, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, your state association of independent schools, and others). Most teachers in the middle grades join their state teachers' organization and sometimes the state reading teachers' association. Once you join an organization, work on its committees and offer your site facilities for tours, meetings, and workshops. Such groups welcome well-organized people, whether teachers or museum educators, who are willing to work, and in such groups you will meet the more committed teachers.

•Offer workshops at teachers' professional meetings. Make sure your programs have snappy titles keyed to the interest of teachers and the needs of students. Design them to include hands-on activities and resources that teachers can use in their classes. Employ role-playing and other techniques that are both fun and practical. When teachers attend professional meetings, they search for ideas they can use immediately back at school. Offer them high-quality hand-out material—teachers live on hand-outs—and they will be reminded of your museum every time they photocopy them.

•Coauthor with a teacher articles for professional journals such as *Educational Leadership, Social Education, The History Teacher,* and *Learning Magazine.* Do a quick survey of the teachers you serve to find out what educational periodicals they read.

•Write a grant proposal to develop a new project and include in the budget funds to pay stipends to teachers and to cover teacher-release time.

•Hold an open house for teachers and their families on a weekend. Offer many of the activities you regularly offer schools. Plan the day to be fun and interesting.

•Join other museums in your area to offer a multidisciplinary program for teachers, either as part of an existing social studies conference or as a separate conference itself. For the conference, secure endorsements from local school systems, professional teacher oganizations, and other groups serving teachers. Combine short workshop sessions with an exhibit area featuring the resources and programs your museums have to offer them.

•Ask teachers you have identified as self-starters to join an advisory board or a project development team. Provide a few inexpensive benefits for those teachers who get involved with the museum or who help you conduct workshops—free museum membership and materials, special programs for their students, new classroom materials or teaching activities.

•Consider purchasing a mailing list from a list broker in order to advertise your regular museum programs and your special workshops. Such companies provide mailing labels that contain the names and addresses of teachers. They often organize the lists by grade level, subject specialty, and zip code. You can develop you own list of principals and schools by using your state's department of education directory, but mailings to principals tend to end up in wastebaskets. Mailings to individual teachers usually land on the teachers' desks. Word-of-mouth, however, remains the most effective form of advertising.

•Think carefully about the workshop dates before you advertise the programs. Stay away from major school vacations, the end of grading periods, and the end of the school year. Teachers say that after mid-May they find it difficult to attend any workshops. Schools that provide release time prefer weekdays, but teachers will attend a Saturday workshop they think especially relevant to their needs.

•Produce attractive promotional materials and announcements to help convince teachers a workshop is worth their while. Consider, too, other promotional strategies: ask professors of education at nearby colleges to distribute fliers to their students and post announcements on bulletin boards; send a description of the workshop to the newsletter of the state department of education and the state council for the social studies, as well as other relevant periodicals; encourage teachers you know to pass out fliers and to spread the word. And, most importantly, send an announcement—or better yet, a short article—to your local newspapers. Prepare a press release and send it to the education reporter. Follow-up with a telephone call.

Financial matters

Should you charge a fee for your teacher workshops? Won't a fee discourage teachers from coming at all? You must consider such questions. Unless a museum is willing to commit itself financially to the workshop and allow staff to spend the time necessary to collaborate with teachers on program development, the staff can't do the workshop well. On the other hand, money the museum spends for education program development may come only at the expense or delay of other museum activities.

Clearly, when a museum asks teachers and schools to collaborate on a program, it can hardly expect them to pay a workshop fee. Indeed, since teachers function as consultants on their own time (unless the school agrees to release them and to pay their substitutes), you should offer either a stipend to the teachers or at least some other benefit such as membership, free admission for students during the piloting of the program, and free program materials.

Many museums seek outside funding for project development and the accompanying workshops. In some states, the state department of education or the state council on the arts and humanities funds projects designed to promote collaboration between museums and schools. Others provide grants for teacher training. Individual school districts sometimes have in-service training budgets to release teachers to attend workshops. Usually such grants require some cost sharing by the museums and the schools. Grant funds often cover cash expenses not already budgeted, such as teacher stipends, printing, transportation expenses, and some museum staff time. In-kind cost sharing often includes salaries of the museum staff, indirect costs of operating the museum, and salaries for substitute teachers who take over classes while others attend your workshop.

Grant-supported projects, though, often mask the

long-term expenses of operating the program and of offering teacher workshops. The museum staff and school administration should make tentative budget projections to avoid developing a program on grant support that neither can afford when the grant ends. Many museums have developed high-quality, grant-funded programs that could not be sustained. In general, it is better to let programs grow gradually, creating a sense of positive momentum.

After a museum establishes its programs and develops a good reputation, it should charge workshop fees to cover costs of workshops, either through direct fees or through contracts with schools or other funding agencies. The fees can range from $5 to $35 or more for a six-hour workshop, depending upon whether the workshop fee includes lunch and materials, whether a well-known speaker has been engaged for the day, and other features. Schools customarily pay for services; if museums do not charge what their programs cost, they will not be able to sustain them.

Many museums find that offering credit to teachers for workshops entices them to attend. The credit can be formal graduate credit, offered through a cooperating college or university, or it can be in-service credit granted by the teachers' school system. In either case, you must first negotiate with the credit-giving organization to define contact hours, demonstrated work (papers, curricula), grading, and other issues.

Conclusion

Frequently, various commission reports urge reforms in education and create opportunities for museum-school programming. The reports and the state requirements that sometimes follow build a museum's audience for teacher workshops. Museums that anticipate the needs of teachers, students, and principals and that have developed appropriate programs have a unique opportunity to forge long-lasting relationships with teachers and school systems.

We cannot assume that teachers and principals will come knocking on our doors; they are simply too busy to develop programs in unfamiliar fields. We cannot assume that teachers will remember our programs from year to year or that teachers will convert to museum-based teaching approaches by participating in a single workshop or program. Instead, we must be willing to do more than what we perceive to be our share to initiate and to maintain collaborations. We will need to write the grants, work with teachers to develop easy-to-use, challenging curricula and instructional materials, and promote our programs effectively. We will need to develop expertise in the world of the schools as well as in our own historical content. But if we design teacher workshops that link historical societies and school systems, our educational programs will be long lasting and effective in communicating the spirit of museums to generations of learners.

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A Teacher Workshop Checklist

Preparation

- ☐ objectives defined
- ☐ materials developed and organized, including handouts
- ☐ activities well thought out and appropriate to objectives
- ☐ sequence and timetable established
- ☐ staff roles clear
- ☐ interesting title; wording conveys interest and activities as perceived by teachers

Publicity

- ☐ audience targeted and mail lists assembled
- ☐ mailings and press releases issued in time to allow response
- ☐ plan developed to take advantage of announcements in journals and newsletters or included in mailings of cooperating teacher organizations
- ☐ fliers colorful and have eye-catching visuals and design

Logistics

- ☐ workshop confirmations sent to registrants
- ☐ directions to the museum provided
- ☐ clear directions to the workshop space included
- ☐ security and other museum personnel notified
- ☐ coffee, tea, decaffinated beverage, and refreshments available
- ☐ setting attractive, comfortable, and clean
- ☐ typed agenda prepared
- ☐ name tags typed
- ☐ markers, paper, and other instructional materials available
- ☐ bathrooms nearby and identified
- ☐ distractions minimized (private room, adequate ventilation and heat, and similar comforts)

Workshop Activities

- ☐ overview of the day and clearly stated objectives
- ☐ informal atmosphere
- ☐ balance of information giving (lecture and reading), hands-on activity, and discussion
- ☐ workshop organized around an outline of questions that build from factual knowledge to historical generalization using problem-solving techniques
- ☐ breaks built in (sessions about forty-five minutes to one hour in length)
- ☐ teaching sequence logical and builds on previous activities
- ☐ sense of closure at the end of the day

An Interview with a Principal

Q. *When you receive an inquiry from a museum or historical society about sending a teacher to a workshop, what do you consider?*

Principal: I first consider whether the topic of the workshop deals with an important aspect of our curriculum or helps us provide a better experience for kids than we can provide in the classroom. I also want to know something about the organization offering the program. I want to be sure that the staff there is sympathetic to the needs of the teachers and the students and is able to work with the teachers to develop a good program for the students.

Q. *What are some of the problems you anticipate in working with historical organizations?*

Principal: Many times the historical group will develop a program and perhaps get a small grant to support a teacher workshop before contacting the principal or teachers to help shape the project. The program may not be appropriate to the curriculum of the school or it may demand more time of the staff than we have to give. Another problem is that the staff members of the historical agency are sometimes unqualified to develop materials and teaching strategies that will work with students. A third problem is that the objectives of the historical organization may be unclear. The director may want the kids to visit so the museum will look good, but may not want to devote many resources to the project. The curator of education may be passionately interested in the project but doesn't have the resources to really follow through over the long run. In such a case, even if a collaboration is begun, it will be short lived; successful partnerships require clear goals and firm commitments over two or three years at least.

Q. *Why is it important for the museum to involve principals when they are initiating a teacher training program?*

Principal: A principal's job is to make judgments about the potential of a teacher workshop to contribute to the education of the students in the school. Often the principal must sell the idea of participating in the workshop (and thereby getting involved in a project) to a teacher, to the school board or committee and perhaps to parents, especially if fund raising is involved. Unless the principal knows what the project involves and why it is important, the principal will be a poor advocate. If I am involved, even if only at an orientation level, I can choose a teacher who I think will have the best chance of making a new project a success.

Q. *When a teacher participates in a teacher workshop at a historical museum, what role should the principal play in relationship to the teacher?*

Principal: Ideally, the museum will invite me to an orientation workshop to explain what the program is all about, to involve me a little in the materials and activities they intend to use with the teachers and to answer my questions. This process can also be accomplished by having someone come to my school to talk with me. I like to have some input into the program "menu." I can then talk with teachers about the project/workshop before they go to it.

When the teachers complete the training, I try to initiate a follow-up meeting to discuss what the outcomes of the training are and how they will affect the way we teach the students. I try to be encouraging and supportive, but also try to get the teachers to be specific about what will be implemented and to clarify areas of confusion. Sometimes the teachers and museum staff develop a program that does not

belong in the curriculum of a particular grade. Unless we catch this problem early, it can become terribly awkward and disruptive to the school. Also, my role is to provide budgetary support within the usual severe limits, to facilitate the logistics if field study is involved and to keep the superintendent and school committee and parents informed. I often make sure there is publicity for the project during implementation.

In the event that there is a problem between the school and the historical organization with which we are working, I try to resolve the problem in a positive way for both partners. At some point, when the project has been implemented, I sit with my teachers to discuss revisions and incorporation into the school curriculum and school calendar.

The principal's role can be well illustrated by considering what happens to a museum-school partnership if a teacher transfers to a new grade level or leaves teaching completely. The principal provides the continuity to maintain the institutional commitment to the project. Similarly, if the principal leaves, then the ongoing support of the teachers is highly important to convince the new principal of the worth of the program.

Q. *Many museum people say that they cannot get teachers or principals to even think about coming to a workshop. Do you have some suggestions of effective strategies to get the ear of principals?*

Principal: It is fair to say at the outset that there are some principals who will be extremely hard to reach either because they do not see museum programs and resources as being affordable, easily implemented or workable for children within the severe budget and time constraints operating on the schools. Such principals will be reached best by an enthusiastic self starting teacher armed with a dynamite program developed by the museum, preferably subsidized by a grant.

But other strategies are useful too. Most principals will be willing to talk with the museum educator if the educator can come to school. If the museum can offer something that addresses a school priority in a significant way and is willing to do more than its share in the partnership initially, at least, principals listen. Thus a program that is designed to improve student thinking, reading, or writing skills will receive more of a response than a program described as simply a local history program.

A good presentation by museum staff at an annual principals' meeting may catch administrators with their minds open to new ideas and resources. An open house at the museum for administrators and their families featuring your programs for students can meet a personal need for family leisure while also selling your museum to the principal.

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