MAINTAINING EXCELLENCE IN THE DOCENT CORPS

Jan Thorman
The Walters Art Museum
Baltimore, Maryland
THE WALTERS ART MUSEUM
OVERVIEW

36,000 objects, 55 centuries and many different cultures
2016-17 Numbers:
- 476 tours
- 17 topics
- 23,000 students
- 4,500 adults
- 60 docents
- 10-20 new docents biennially
DOCENT TRAINING

- 12-month initial training
- Ongoing weekly enrichment
Docent interest in long-term plan

Museum interest in qualified docents
GOALS, OBJECTIVES & MEASURES

- Development
- Implementation
- Evaluation
What is a goal?
What is an objective?
Why do we need both?
Examples
Brainstorm one goal and a related objective for docent enrichment in your institution.

Write on post-it notes

5-10 minutes
Help docents to maintain and to improve their ability to deliver excellent tours that meet the museum’s mission.

Promote collegiality in the docent corps by engaging docents in cooperative learning and by providing opportunities for sharing ideas and experiences related to tours.
Docents with more than two years of tenure are confident in giving all standard tours in the school programs offerings.
MEASURES

- Measure: tangible actions to accomplish an objective
- Examples
- Activity
Brainstorm with your neighbors about 1-2 measures for the objectives you developed in our last exercise.

Write on post-it notes

5 minutes
Committee with docent & museum members brainstormed

Similar to process we used today
GOT IT, NOW WHAT?

- System to plan enrichment sessions
- Evaluation to track success
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OBJ#</th>
<th>MEASURES</th>
<th>DATE OF SESSION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The training schedule includes a clear statement of purpose and expected outcome of each session.</td>
<td>2014-15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2015-16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2016-17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2017-18</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>9/15--emergency exit review</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## Docent Enrichment 2017

All sessions meet on Monday, 10:15-12, unless noted.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Objective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10/9</td>
<td><strong>Docent Memorial Lecture</strong></td>
<td>Enrich knowledge of Buddhist art, with specific attention to the creation of an image of the Buddha.</td>
<td>Memorial lecture</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Robert DeCaroli</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Professor in Art History, George Mason University</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Please meet in the auditorium</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>10/16</td>
<td><strong>Día de los Muertos altar &amp; Coyote</strong></td>
<td>Learn about the museum's collaboration with contemporary artist, Edgar Reyes.</td>
<td>Exhibition training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Alexander Jarman and Allison Gulick</td>
<td>Familiarize yourself with <em>Día de los Muertos</em> and its traditions.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Please meet in the auditorium</em></td>
<td>Review how to discuss the altar and exhibition with school groups and adult groups.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/23</td>
<td><strong>LGBTQ training</strong></td>
<td>Review how to be inclusive of LGBTQ individuals in adult and school tours.</td>
<td>Visitor management and customer service training</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kate Bishop</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>The LGBT Health Resource Center of Chase Brexton Health Care</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Please meet in the auditorium</em></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/23</td>
<td><strong>Art of the Americas Q&amp;A</strong></td>
<td>Learn more about the pre-Columbian artworks included in the <em>Coyote</em> exhibition.</td>
<td>Exhibition training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ellen Hoobler</td>
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<td></td>
<td><em>Please meet in the Manuscripts gallery</em></td>
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*This calendar is subject to change. Any updates will be communicated via e-mail.*
Goal: Build docents’ skill in delivering excellent educational experiences for visitors by providing content and activities in teaching techniques.

- Objective: Docents practice/share/know strategies for dealing with unusual situations on tours, from large groups and difficult visitors to emergencies.
  - Measure: A workshop on “visitor management” is scheduled at least once a year.
- Objective: Docents understand the customer service part of providing tours—that is, satisfying and exceeding the expectations of our visitors, so they will return and encourage others to visit.
  - A workshop on customer service skills is scheduled at least once every three years.
Evaluation of individual sessions
Annual brainstorming about the overall program
Walters Art Museum Docent Enrichment
Evaluation Form

Today’s date: ______________________

On a scale of 1 (not at all useful) to 4 (extremely useful) please rate the usefulness of the topic(s) covered in today’s enrichment session:

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<tr>
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<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not at all useful</td>
<td>Somewhat useful</td>
<td>Useful</td>
<td>Extremely useful</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please explain:

_____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________

On a scale of 1 (not at all) to 4 (exceeded) please rate how well today’s enrichment session met the purpose listed on the syllabus:

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<th>4</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>Somewhat</td>
<td>Met</td>
<td>Exceeded</td>
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Please explain:

_____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________

If today’s enrichment session included touring techniques, please rate how comfortable you feel using these techniques as a result of this session:

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<th>4</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not at all comfortable</td>
<td>Somewhat comfortable</td>
<td>Comfortable</td>
<td>Extremely comfortable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please explain:

_____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________
LESSONS LEARNED

- Docents express greater satisfaction with training
- Evaluation is important
- Feedback loop is needed
- Docents need reminders
QUESTIONS?

Contact me at: jthorman@gmail.com