

Engaged Gazes: Principles that Online and Flipped Classes Can Learn From (Good) Museum Exhibits

"The GLIDE Principles: Curation is not just finding the right materials; it's also crafting a visually arresting exhibit that makes informed choices about attention, cognitive load, and preferences driven by the brain's physiology"

Gaze

Give Priority to the Visitor's First Glance

1. Offer a striking first impression. Attract from afar, like a poster session.
2. Use emotional appeals first, and logical appeals as a distant second
3. MUCH effort paid to things visually interesting but little immediate payoff in learning. Remember that mystery drives interest.
4. Intrigue with a striking photo gallery first, then comes the learning

Layout

Craft Layout Intentionally to Reward Desired Behaviors, Such as Playing, Analyzing, Linger

1. Carefully plan the path so that even as you go new places, you see familiar things at a new angle. Allow situating and orienting visually (not with text) – create a visual language unique to your content. Create opportunities to explore. An unmarked ledge shows a fresh vantage point and rewards exploration.
2. Use size, proximity, or “around the corner suddenness” to surprise and generate interest. Overwhelm with spectacle: scale and scope
3. Put the spectacular stuff that speaks for itself at the end. Less immediately interesting stuff should go up front when attention and stamina are highest
4. Show both the above and the below. (ie, change the perspective on literally the same thing)

Immersion

Borrow Ideas of Immersion from Theme Parks

1. Exhibits clearly thematically separated. Each has a visually striking and DIFFERENT entry point. Visual tricks and optical illusions can help.

2. Audio helps create “placemaking.” Use as many senses as you can, including touch (not taste or usually smell).
3. Placemaking is different in each window, despite serving the larger theme. A “you are there” feeling. The audience is OK with a switching theme.
4. Give attention to minor details many people will miss
5. Leverage storytelling and narrative - people want to know what comes next

Diversions

Include Diversions and Variety

1. Cognitive science tells us there is a persistent drive for novelty. Provide games. Maybe even Easter eggs?
2. Use different technologies and hands on things, new EVERY time to enable exploring.
3. Vary size and shape. Vary lighting levels. Some exhibits are dark.
4. Reward longer observation.

Explore

Explore Content in Layered Stages

1. Use comparisons. Show what's new in the context of what's old.
2. Factoids can come as callouts, even amid “too many” other details. This provides focus. We don't expect museum visitors to remember everything. Should online classes?
3. Start learning with questions.
4. Provide experts to answer questions. Sometimes oration (narration) via loudspeaker.
5. Make them think. Challenge them to connect to their own life.
6. Introduce a subject by sensationalizing it. Also try a “problem” approach. Remember to mention the human (or: why should I care?) element.
7. Gaze = wants narrowed focus and choice. Avoid clutter, per Disney Imagineers.

Mickey's Ten Commandments

By Imagineer Marty Sklar

1. **Know your audience** – Identify the prime audience for your attraction or show before you begin design
2. **Wear your Guests' shoes** – Insist that your team members experience your creation just the way Guests do
3. **Organize the flow of people and ideas** – Make sure there is a logic and sequence in our stories and the way Guests experience them
4. **Create a wienie (visual magnet)** – Create visual “targets” that will lead Guests clearly and logically through your facility
5. **Communicate with visual literacy** – Make good use of color, shape form, texture – all the nonverbal ways of communication
6. **Avoid overload – create turn-ons** – Resist the temptation to overload your audience with too much information and too many objects
7. **Tell one story at a time** – Stick to the story line; good stories are clear, logical, and consistent
8. **Avoid contradictions** – maintain identity – Details in design or content that contradict one another confuse an audience about your story or the time period it takes place in
9. **For every ounce of treatment, provide a ton of treat** – Walt Disney said you can educate people, but don't tell them you're doing it. Make it fun!
10. **Keep it up! (Maintain it)** – In a Disney park or resort, everything must work. Poor maintenance is poor show!