

PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT TASK: CREATING A MUSEUM DISPLAY

GOAL: To create a display based on census data to be shown as part of the Museum of Work and Culture's 20th Century Immigration in the Blackstone Valley exhibit

ROLE: You are a young historian, hired to create your first museum display.

AUDIENCE: Middle school and high school students, museum visitors of all ages, and the director of the National Museum of American History

SITUATION: You and your team have researched 20th century immigration into Rhode Island's Blackstone Valley communities using census data. Now you have been hired to use this research to create an additional display for the new exhibit at the Museum of Work and Culture. To make this opportunity even more exciting, the director of the National Museum of American History in Washington, D.C. has expressed interest in this exhibit. If he is impressed with your work, he'll bring the whole exhibit to D.C.

PRODUCT PERFORMANCE: You and your team will create a museum display that effectively demonstrates what the census data reveals about 20th century immigration into Rhode Island's Blackstone Valley communities. The display will integrate a timeline, graphs and charts, maps, and an interactive computer game or topic exploration tool. It will be woven together with text that articulates a clear, logical, historical argument.

STEPS:

1. Form a group of five, with an expert on each of the censuses: 1910, 1930, 1950, 1970, and 1990.
2. With your group, discuss your research up to this point. Based on your discussion, form two or three potential thesis statements.
3. Brainstorm outlines of the argumentation and evidence that would support each thesis. Once you can see which thesis makes the most sense for your group, select it as the driving force behind your museum display.
4. Divide the following tasks, encouraging group members to volunteer for those aspects of the project for which they are best suited:
 - Creation of a 20th century timeline that ties social and political developments in U.S. history to trends and changes in immigration patterns in Rhode Island's Blackstone valley communities (*Although this can be accomplished on poster board, it would be wonderful to use a tool like Dipity.com to create an online timeline that could be linked to or embedded in the Museum of Work and Culture's web site.*)
 - Selection of the 10 most significant aspects of 20th century immigration in Rhode Island's Blackstone Valley communities to depict using graphs, charts, cartograms, and at least one map (*Although it likely will be possible to use graphs created earlier in this unit, students should generate new graphs as necessary to illustrate their argument.*)

- Generation of a computer game or exploration tool that would excite the interest of middle and high school students and help museum visitors understand the census data more completely (*A web-based game would be ideal since it could be linked to or embedded on the Museum of Work and Culture's web site.*)
 - Crafting the text of the argument to accompany the various aspects of the display, guiding visitors sequentially through the argument and evidence
5. Complete all tasks listed above.
 6. Assemble the display in a logical, artistically pleasing way and conduct a group self-evaluation based on the project rubric.
 7. Make any adjustments deemed important after the self-evaluation.
 8. Present your display.

RUBRIC

COMPLETION: <i>How much of the project has been completed?</i>				
5	4	3	2	1
<i>All</i>	<i>Most</i>	<i>Some</i>	<i>Little</i>	<i>None</i>
ARGUMENT: <i>How accurately and convincingly is the thesis argued using the evidence shown in the display?</i>				
5	4	3	2	1
<i>Entirely</i>	<i>Mostly</i>	<i>Somewhat</i>	<i>Problematic</i>	<i>Neither</i>
DISPLAY: <i>How visually stimulating, artistically pleasing, and logically sequenced is the display?</i>				
5	4	3	2	1
<i>Entirely</i>	<i>Mostly</i>	<i>Somewhat</i>	<i>Problematic</i>	<i>Neither</i>
COMPONENTS: <i>Rate each component of the display based on its quality and contribution to the overall impact of the exhibit.</i>				
TIMELINE				
5	4	3	2	1
GRAPHS, CHARTS, CARTOGRAMS, AND MAPS				
5	4	3	2	1
COMPUTER GAME / EXPLORATION TOOL				
5	4	3	2	1
DISPLAY TEXT				
5	4	3	2	1
<i>Excellent</i>	<i>Strong</i>	<i>Adequate</i>	<i>Limited</i>	<i>Weak</i>
POINT TOTAL:				

UNDERSTANDING THE POINTS:

35-33 = A

Your exhibit is going to the National Museum of American History in Washington, D.C.!

32-28 = B

The Museum of Work and Culture has offered you a permanent position on its staff.

27-25 = C

You are encouraged to continue developing your skill in a Museum Studies program.

24-21 = D

20-7 = F