

Message originally distributed by email on 5 Feb. 08

Hello,

I am working on a better system for providing you with class notes ahead of time, so that you can refer to an outline of what will be covered before each session. I realize things have been too rushed in the first two meetings, but I feel like I have a good sense now for how much is reasonable to cover in a single session. Here's what you need to know about the assignment for next week:

You are expected to produce a proposal for an interactive exhibit element for installation at the Lower East Side Tenement Museum. You don't have to go and visit the museum, but it's a very nice place, and it will help you to understand their issues. At next Monday's class, each student will give a brief (5 minutes) presentation, which should consist of the following components:

1. An abstract, no more than a paragraph or two, in which you provide a very broad overview of what you envision for the exhibit. Your curatorial mission should be made explicit here: what are you trying to evoke, or how do you imagine that your intervention will improve or enhance the museum's overall offerings.
2. A brief description, audio clip, or other media that demonstrates the concepts underpinning your interactive exhibit. This can be very broadly interpreted, and I am hoping that we can see some very imaginative, potentially even outlandish, ideas. This is an opportunity to really push the limits of what can be done, or to try something that you have never seen done before.
3. A plan for evaluating the interactive piece, in which museum visitors are asked to interact with the exhibit. You have to consider how you would need to organize a usability study that stands a good chance of leading to a successful result. I am not saying that your design proposal has to be practical, or that it has to be cost-effective, only that you need to have considered the methods you will use to evaluate its success at accomplishing the goals that you set out in the abstract.
4. Having given you license to be extremely bold and even fanciful in your approach to this project, I am also interested in how your concepts are to be implemented, from a technical or artistic perspective. Therefore, your proposal should include a rough budget, and a brief discussion of how the cost is justified in how LETM benefits in proportion to the effort required to realize your vision.

Needless to say, the project that you propose must include a discussion of multi-sensory display and pointing concepts. This does not imply a technological answer; I have been talking with a camp upstate that wants to develop a system of windchimes, where each section of the property is marked with a distinctive and easy to discriminate aural signature to help mark the outdoor environment in a very low-tech way for their visually

impaired campers. So, please don't feel that the only appropriate answer to this problem is a computer or electronic device.

I know that this a lot to ask in a short time, and I will be available consistently to discuss your ideas. If you really need extra time, that's possible, although you won't be able to have proposal reviewed by the LETM staffers if you don't present on Monday. While the assignment looks kind of daunting, you are only expected do a brief presentation, so please don't worry too much if you don't have every detail worked out. Here are the links to the existing LETM projects that I think are interesting and worth looking as you consider your approach this problem.

<http://www.wearemulticolored.com/>

http://www.tenement.org/Virtual_Tour/index_virtual.html

<http://www.tenement.org/folksongs/>

Also: I am trying to find an article that Ed Steinfeld mentioned that discusses the Universal Design implications of the "Hanging Chad" butterfly ballot from the 2000 Florida presidential election, and also some information about current efforts to develop new voting technologies that satisfy the very complex demands of large-scale elections. If we have time at the end of next class, I'd like to have a brief discussion about that, and Ed, who is the Director of the [University of Buffalo Universal Design Center](#), will be available by conference call to answer our questions about this topic if they come up. I will send out some additional information about this tomorrow.

Steve

Originally distributed via email on 6 Feb. 2008

Hello,

The question has arisen: is it OK to team up with other students for the first assignment, which calls for producing a proposal for the Lower East Side Tenement Museum's new visitor center. My response is, yes, that's fine, but I will expect that joint projects will be done in greater depth and than individual ones. If we consider that each individual presentation takes 3 to 5 minutes, then joint projects should take 3 to 5 minutes times the number of people in the team. Please let me know if this is clear, and don't hesitate to ask questions via email while the course website is being improved.

Steve