

Jessie Gillan
LIS 697 Museum Ed. & Library Outreach
Final Assignment: Educational Experience
November 28, 2009

Educational Experience for Sesame Street: A Celebration of 50 Years of Life on the Street
Central Branch Brooklyn Public Library

Target Age – 2nd through 5th Grade
Exhibition Tour with Bibliographic Instruction

The Brooklyn Public Library is holding the Sesame Street exhibit at the Central Branch from November 14th, 2009 through February 21st, 2010. The exhibit is held in three locations within their library and was curated by the people at Sesame Street's Workshop. As you enter the library your eyes are immediately drawn to the first area of the exhibit the Foyer cases. In these cases are photos, memorabilia, puppets, props, ephemera, a map of Sesame Street, and much more. Once you are through with this area, it is clear the next step of the exhibit is in the Grand Lobby. The lobby has a gallery style display of Sesame Street book art from the Workshop's Publishing Archive, featuring materials from the 1970s to present day. The last piece of the exhibit is found in the Youth Wing, which is where both the children's and young adult materials are kept at the Central Branch. In this area there are more props and photographs, but mostly contains materials from the Sesame Street's that have been created around the world. For the assignment I felt it was necessary to keep the museum unchanged, as it was curated by Sesame Street itself and working within the limitations of the space it seemed as if it would be the best to create a program around.

For the exhibition tour and bibliographic instruction materials, I created materials for the 2nd to 5th grade age range. Sesame Street is generally targeted at the preschool or kindergarten age child, and the exhibit, in many ways, is targeted for adults. With this knowledge, it seemed for the best to aim the educational experience at this age range because perhaps it may be the trickiest to engage them with the materials. With this in mind I created a specific activity for each section of the exhibit to keep the class groups motivated to learn more about Sesame Street. Since to them, Sesame Street is already

beyond their educational needs, it seemed appropriate to take the exhibit a bit further with this group.

The teacher preparatory materials for the class tours include a sheet detailing activities in each section including the education standards that the activity targets. Also, included is information on the exhibit provided by the Sesame Street Workshop, a list of materials that the students should bring with them to the library, and a list of follow up points that the teacher can address with the class.

The handouts for the students are based on each activity. The first activity brings the class into the Youth Wing where (depending on the size of the class) are grouped into teams or with partners. Each team is placed by a step stool which is in front of one of the Sesame Street country displays. From this point the teams are given the activity sheet which details that they should research the country that they have been placed beside to find that country's national bird. The goal of the task is to create a profile and then draw a picture of the "Big Bird" of that country and then see how close they are to the actual country's "Big Bird" character. The educational purpose of this task is to do a bit of bibliographic instruction with the children's reference materials, having the encyclopedia and country books out on a table the students can research and find the necessary information on the country's national bird.

Following this activity the class is taken to the Grand Lobby where they are handed their activity sheet for this area and given free range to look through all of the Sesame Street book art displayed. The activity sheet asks them to choose a favorite artwork, decipher what lesson is trying to be taught, and explain why they chose that artwork. This part of the tour and time at the library is to focus on learning art gallery and museum skills, interpreting artworks and also describing why an artwork is attractive. The library can also highlight it's collection of Sesame Street materials, putting out on the tables books that the artworks can be found in and the work that goes into creating children's books.

Finally, the last piece of the library visit is a bit crafty. The class group is brought into the Foyer, to view the display cases. The cases feature many of the classic Sesame Street characters such as Bert, Ernie, Grover, and more... so after the class has had time to take in the display cases, it is then time to go to a separate room where the class can make their own puppets. Using inexpensive craft supplies such as paper bags, felt, socks, and so

on the class is given the last activity sheet which tells them to make their own Sesame Street character. The sheet details some of the basic parts to creating a puppet and Sesame Street character. At the end of the experience, the class or individual students are photographed with their creations as another takeaway from the visit.

The follow up materials include a survey of the individual activities for the teacher to complete. Also, the teacher can give a homework assignment asking the students to interview/talk to their parents about Sesame Street. The purpose behind this is to illustrate to the class the true impact of Sesame Street has had on education for the past 40 years.

For the class of Mr./Ms. Smith:

Thank you for choosing to visit the Brooklyn Public Library's exhibit of Sesame Street: A Celebration of 40 year of Life on the Street. We are very excited to have this exhibit with us during this winter season and have created a special educational experience for your class (in the range of 1st through 4th graders). The experience is with three separate activities highlighting the three displays of materials in the exhibit.

The first is in the Youth Wing and this exhibit features many displays highlighting Sesame Street's expansion into over 120 countries. The activity is to have the class group up and research a specific country displayed and work on creating a "Big Bird" character for that country using the information about the countries national birds. This activity allows the class to use many of the children's reference books and other non-fiction materials that we have at the library.

This activity is utilizing the New York Standards for Education listed below*:

ELA Standards for Grades 1 through 4: Reading, Writing, Social interaction skills including but not limited to identifying and interpreting facts taken from maps, graphs, charts, and other visuals, with assistance; Respect the age, gender, social position, and culture of the speaker; Make predictions, draw conclusions, and make inferences about events and characters; Apply corrective strategies, using classroom resources, such as teachers, peers, and reference tools

The second activity is held in our Grand Lobby where Sesame Street is displaying a great selection of artworks from books. The works are shown in a typical art gallery format and the activity asks the students to choose a favorite work then guess what lesson that the artwork is trying to teach and explain why they chose that artwork. We will also have the book

This activity focuses on the New York Standards for Education in the Arts and ELA standards*:

Elementary STANDARD 3 of the Arts: Responding to and Analyzing Works of Art

* Information on standards directly from the NYSED.GOV website

Students will respond critically to a variety of works in the arts, connecting the individual work to other works and to other aspects of human endeavor and thought.

ELA Standards for Grades 1 through 4: Writing and Reading skills including but not limited to: Distinguish between print and pictures, general writing standards including analysis and evaluation; Develop an idea within a brief text; Write sentences in logical order and create paragraphs to develop ideas.

The final activity allows the class to create their own Sesame Street character. In the entrance foyer of the Central library we have two cases that feature many of the actual puppets used on Sesame Street. The class will have some time to look through these cases then join us in our classroom to have some fun creating a Sesame Street character for their own. The activity sheet details some of the main components included in a character and we will provide the materials with a small fee (\$5 per student) to spend some time making a great puppet. After 15 to 30 minutes we will gather everyone together for a group photograph so the class can have a takeaway from their day here at the Brooklyn Public Library.

The standards that this activity works with include:

Standards for the Arts: STANDARD 1: Creating, Performing, and Participating in the Arts

Students will actively engage in the processes that constitute creation and performance in the arts (dance, music, theatre, and visual arts) and participate in various roles in the arts.

ELA Standards for Grades 1 through 4: Dramatize or retell stories, using puppets, toys, and other Props; Role-play characters and events from stories; Describe familiar persons, places, or objects.

A small note: this exhibit is curated by the Sesame Workshop and in some ways is targeted primarily to an adult audience.

The educational experience should take three hours including time for lunch at the library.

Materials required, please have the students bring with them to the library: a pencil and a folder. Otherwise the materials for the puppets will be covered by the \$5 per student fee.

Thank you again for your continued interest in the Brooklyn Public Library,

Jessie Gillan

Educational Outreach Librarian

Follow Up Survey:

How would you rate the following parts of your educational experience at the Brooklyn Public Library's Sesame Street exhibit today? A 1 to 10 scale (10 being highest / 1 being lowest)

1. Librarian Instructor

1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7 – 8 – 9 – 10

Comments: _____

2. Activity 1: National Bird & Big Bird Country Reference

1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7 – 8 – 9 – 10

Comments: _____

3. Activity 2: Book Art Gallery – Art Interpretation Exercise

1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7 – 8 – 9 – 10

Comments: _____

4. Activity 3: Puppet to Muppet Interpretation

1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7 – 8 – 9 – 10

Comments: _____

Additional Comments:

Optional homework assignment:

Ask the students to interview their parent's about Sesame Street and report back to class the next morning with the results. This assignment highlights the impact that Sesame Street has made on education for the past 40 years because many parents as well as their children have grown up with Sesame Street. Perhaps, the students' parents have grown up outside of the United States and can discuss the differences between the U.S. Sesame Street and their country's version.