Lessons Learned: Working with 30 Students in 4 Years

Meghan Musolff
Assistant Coordinator, VRC
History of Art, University of Michigan
November 2010
About me....

Meghan Musolff

Assistant Coordinator
Visual Resource Collection
About my students...

- Undergraduate students
  - Work-study
  - Non work-study
- History of Art graduate students
- School of Information interns
- Museum Studies interns
- Temporary staff (grown-ups)
In a *typical* presentation on working with students we would focus on defining and describing the typical student....
(a wordle of words used to describe a typical student)
But....not all students and temporary workers are going to fit into this profile

Everyone is different and not all students are going to have these skills and characteristics.
So...instead this presentation will focus on the one thing we do have control over....
YOU.
I. Identify **Management Style** and **Expectations**
Take a moment to do some self-reflection on your management style
• How much interaction with employees do you have/want?
• What kind of personality do you have?
• How do you prefer to train students?
• How do you make decisions?
Identify expectations.
Use your management style and expectations to help you with student interviews and training.
Let students know about YOU.
If possible, conduct student **exit interviews** to make sure reality matches your self-reflection.
II. Inform Students of Overall Goal
• Why are we working on this project?

• What is the student’s role in the overall process?

• Why is this task/project important?
Providing background and context to projects is essential to give students a sense of ownership to his/her work.
III. Prepare Students for *Self-Sufficiency*
Preparing students to work on their own is the best use of your time.
Two ideas:

• Create *written* instructions for each project.

• Give students *multiple* projects.
So...it’s kinda about them...
About my students...

- Undergraduate students
  - Work-study
  - Non work-study
- History of Art graduate students
- School of Information interns
- Museum Studies interns
- Temporary staff (grown-ups)
All these **different types** of students bring skills and interests to their positions.
Our job to figure out how to use these different skill sets to our advantage.
IV. Tailor Projects to Student Interests
Boring project = less boring project.
V. Create **Partnerships** with Students
Supervisors and students have different roles and responsibilities, but we must work together as partners to improve our organizations.
Some suggestions.....

• Work on a project together.

• Solve problems together.

• Make. It. Fun.....together.
Thank you.

Meghan Musolff
musolffm@umich.edu