

Public Scholarship in Action

Problem Based Learning Exercise

Participants will be divided into three groups and assigned a group number from one to three. The individuals in each assigned group will read the research project assigned to them and devise programs for engaging with the public to disseminate the information gathered from that project to a broader audience. The groups will be given 20 minutes to discuss and develop public scholarship activities for their project. A selected representative from each group will then present the group's ideas to the workshop participants and instructors for this exercise.

Things to consider:

- Who would be interested in learning about this subject? (specialty groups, organizations, professionals, educators, etc...)
- What kind of educational programs could be created to teach new audiences about this material?
- How might this project be represented online using web-based platforms, blogs, and social networking sites to educate and engage new audiences?
- What media sources might find this project of interest?
- What visuals or didactics could be used to discuss this subject?
- Can the idea be made into a hands-on workshop?
- How could this research be presented to K-12, college, and lifelong learners?
- Are there groups you could collaborate with to help disseminate this research?
- Where might the challenges be in presenting this material to a broader audience?

Group I

"The dye is cast: investigating colorants used in North American quillwork prior to the 1850s"

This research project focuses on the scientific analysis of dyes used on pre-1850s Eastern Woodlands quillwork using chromatography (HPLC, GC-MS, MS-MS), electrochemistry, and spectroscopy (NMR, IR, fluorescence) as appropriate to determine the principal dye colorant on the quillwork. By focusing on a time period prior to the North American introduction of synthetic aniline dyes (post 1856), the project will limit colorants to only those naturally occurring; the limited number of natural dyes, together with existing historical and ethnobotanical references, may make it possible to identify the colorant present, and also to suggest probable sources for the particular dyestuff. The results of the research will be interpreted in contexts relevant to Native and non-Native conservators, curators, historians, anthropologists, and contemporary quillworkers in order to address current questions concerning Native American quillwork dyes up to the mid-19th century.

Group II

"Roses are red, violets are blue: What do flower scrapbooks mean to me and you?"

This research project investigates a variety of printed ephemera from the nineteenth century including visiting cards, sentimental flower poetrybooks, and scrapbooks. The project will consider how the personal and popular intertwine in constructions of culture, literature, and authorship through images of flowers. The project will be concerned not only with what flowers signify, but how they signify. How are authors representing themselves? How are they representing literature? And why are they choosing flowers of all things to do so? Since flowers were collected and pressed into scrapbooks and albums, my project carefully considers the construction of these texts—how flowers served as a cultural currency on and within the page. The project will include looking at mass-produced sources written by popular nineteenth-century authors such as Kate Greenaway's *Language of Flowers* (1884) next to scrapbooks compiled by more obscure figures such as Mary Eliza Bachman (daughter-in-law of James Audubon) to demonstrate how these floral symbols function as important sites of meaning in which literature, learning, and respectability cohere.

Group III

"Sounds of A New Republic: The Role of Music in Washington, DC, 1795-1825"

The research project concerns the decorative arts and social role of music in Washington, DC during the early national period, c. 1795-1825. Washington was unique both as a new city and as the nation's capital, where entertaining often carried political implications, and people used social settings, both private and public, to achieve political gain. The new city's citizens negotiated an unfamiliar landscape and adapted local customs to establish rules of social etiquette. The project will focus on what music can tell us about how elite society formed, set the rules of fashionability and exclusivity, and established standards for entertaining--and how all these ideas relate to politics and the home.