



The Reflective Practice Cycle

A tool for developing and improving programs

Welcome

Agenda

- Introduction
- What is the Reflective Practice Cycle?
- The Reflective Practice Cycle in Action
- Workshopping Goals
- Q&A, Tools and Resources

Here's what we're going to talk about today.

Note: I'll have a copy of this presentation and some tools on my website – link and QR code coming.



museumquestions.com/reflective-practice-cycle

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Who I am

- art museums
- ran children's museum
- Now in Baltimore consulting – program design, evaluation, among other things

What is the Reflective Practice Cycle?




Set goals, align programs, implement and evaluate, reflect and improve.
About to go through each step.

Key advantages:

Build evaluation into your program – a way of knowing if it's doing what you want it to do

Create a culture of experimentation and improvement.



Step 1

Articulate your goals.

About goals:

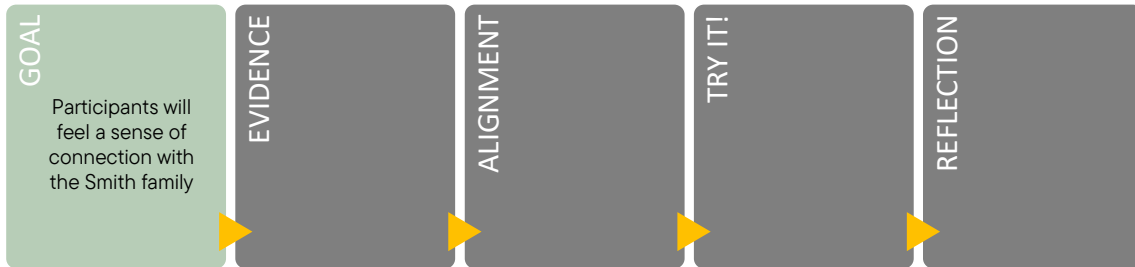
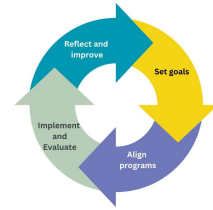
- Sometimes called goals, sometimes objectives – it doesn't matter what you call them
- Goal language – what will your participants know, understand, feel, or be able to do
- Goals don't limit outcomes, but they do guide planning
- Limit the number of goals to 3 or 4

Imagine



Imagining a 19th century historic house designing its public tours program.

STEP 1

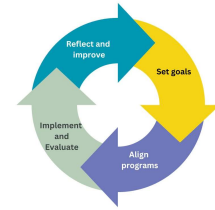


I chose this goal for my example, but this process works with any goals.

Step 2a

Think about your evidence:

How will you know whether your goals have been achieved?

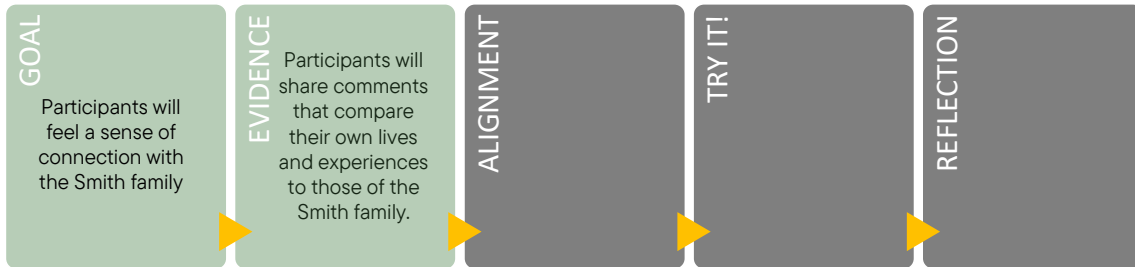
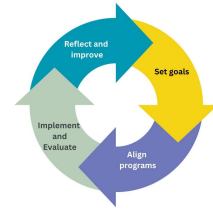


You can say “Participants will understand that people’s perspectives are shaped by their lived experience” or “Participants will feel a sense of connection with the Smith family” – but how will you know this is happening? As you plan your program, what will you need to build in to know that this has been reached?

The first step in aligning your program with your goals is to imagine how you will know your goals have been achieved.

Through this tactic you are building evaluation into your program, which makes it SO much easier.

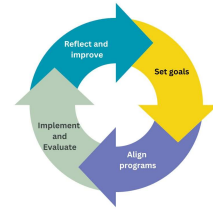
STEP 2a



This is something that the instructor or an observer can actually see in the program.

Step 2b

Design and Align the Program

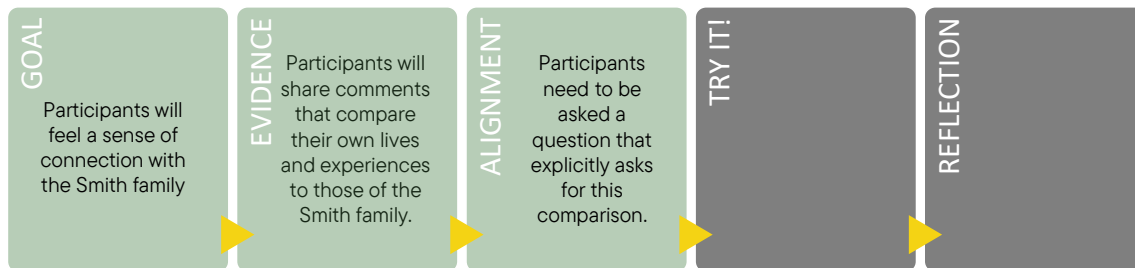
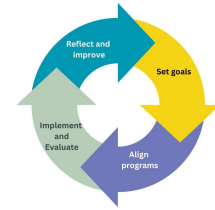


What does your program need to include to achieve these goals and demonstrate this achievement?

What needs to be included in your program that will give you the best shot at having participants share comments that compare their lives and experiences to those of the Smith family?

Through this alignment, programs become intentional and strategic. The more complicated and difficult your topics or goals are – the more you get into telling tough stories – the more important this will be.


STEP 2b



What needs to be included in your program that will give you the best shot at having participants share comments that compare their lives and experiences to those of the Smith family?

For example: What opportunities did Viola Smith have or not have? How is this similar to or different from opportunities and challenges you and your family have faced?

Through this alignment, programs become intentional and strategic. The more complicated and difficult your topics or goals are – the more you get into telling tough stories – the more important this will be.



Step 3

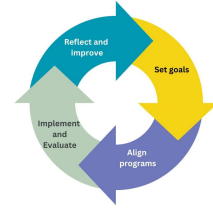
Do the program and Evaluate!

Evaluation is taking a series of steps in order to better understand a program or service.

Evaluating museum programs is difficult because we have so many programs, and evaluation is often layered on after the program is planned, making it an extra task. Which we then often don't do.

Embedded evaluation is much more efficient than external evaluation. You have limited staff and time. Most museums don't evaluate every program. So how will you get the information you need to make sure your program works, and to help you improve it? If you have done steps 1 and 2 effectively, this is now built in to your program design.

STEP 3



GOAL

Participants will feel a sense of connection with the Smith family

EVIDENCE

Participants will share comments that compare their own lives and experiences to those of the Smith family.

ALIGNMENT

Participants need to be asked a question that explicitly asks for this comparison.

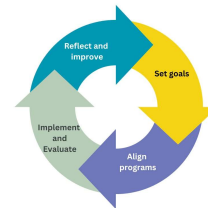
TRY IT!

Do the program and collect your evidence.

REFLECTION

Step 4

Pause and Reflect.

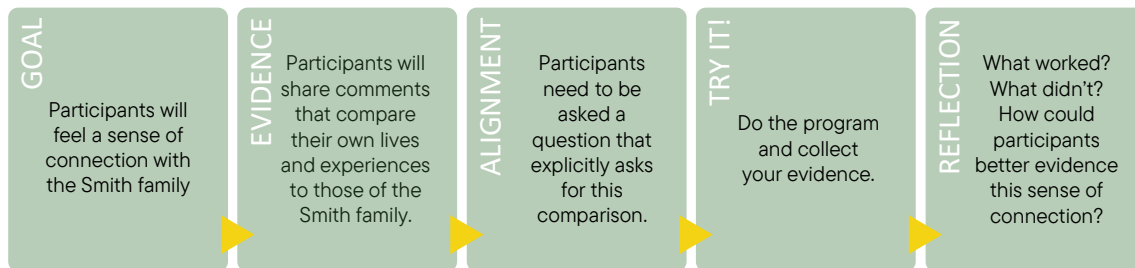
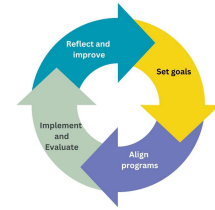


What worked, and what didn't?
How could this program be even better?

A commitment to constant improvement is central to everything I do. I love it because I think in this way we make the field better.

Part of getting better is embracing risk and allowing for productive failure. When you try something and it doesn't work, and you share that, we can all learn together.

STEP 4



When you reflect, you might ponder questions like:

- Did the question elicit the answers you wanted? If not, what other questions could you try?
- Did some types of participants share more than others – for example, were older adults more likely to share than others?
- Did the comparisons demonstrate real historical understanding of the Smith family?
- What else could you try to strengthen this connection making?
- How could you better engage people who don't like talking on tours? Maybe writing? Guided imagery? Pair share?
- Is there different information you might share, that might support this question?

Sometimes you need to change the program. Sometimes you need to change the goal!



Before I share a few examples of this in action – any questions!

The Reflective Practice Cycle in Action



Lefferts Historic House



Learn about Reimagining Lefferts initiative here: <https://www.prospectpark.org/visit-the-park/places-to-go/lefferts-historic-house/reimagine-lefferts/>

The Challenge

How can we engage children and families in the lives of enslaved people who lived in this house, but do so in a positive way that demonstrates resilience?

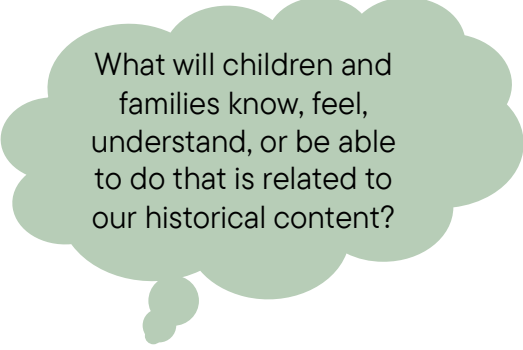
One Approach:

What can we do that will engage kids and is related to our historical content?

Let's play Mancala!



The Reflective Practice Approach:



What will children and families know, feel, understand, or be able to do that is related to our historical content?



Children and their adults will:

- Know the meaning of the word “resilience”
- Understand music as a form of cultural resilience
- Identify aspects of their culture that make them feel resilient

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Kalimba (Hope Masike is a Zimbabwe-born mbira and percussion player, singer and dancer. Her career thus far has been a successful mix of recording and performing artist, activist and teacher. Hope’s greatest motivation is the desire to push traditional mbira, an instrument labelled ‘demonic’ during Zimbabwe’s colonial era, into new and contemporary spaces.)

Baltimore Museum of Industry



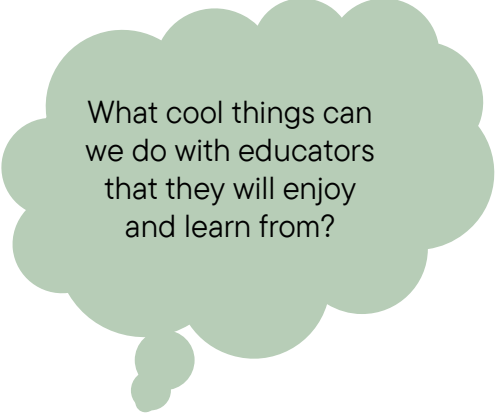
Learn about the Baltimore Museum of Industry here: <https://www.thebmi.org/>
Learn about their History Alive and other school visit programs here:
<https://www.thebmi.org/visit/plan-your-school-group-experience/field-trips-2/>

The Challenge


Offering an extended training to staff educators, including new educators, that helps them do a better job teaching in the galleries.

Their program: An extended (9 month) training for staff educators, focused on their most popular tour, History Alive

One Approach:



What cool things can
we do with educators
that they will enjoy
and learn from?



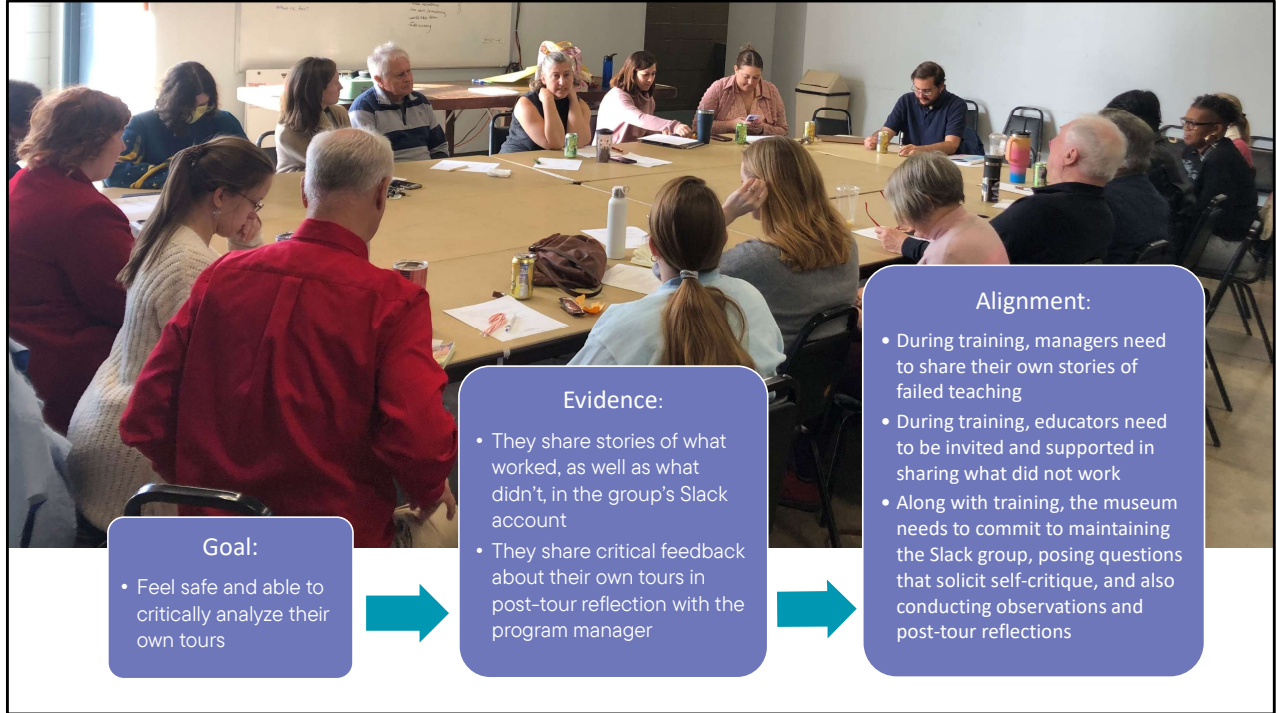
Let's visit some
other museums!
And maybe do
some improv!

The Reflective Practice Approach:

What will participants know, feel, understand, or be able to do?

Educators will:

- Know the history related to the galleries we highlight in the History Alive tour
- Be able to effectively use storytelling and inquiry facilitation strategies for engaging students
- Feel safe and able to critically analyze their tours and how they went
- Understand the Baltimore Museum of Industry as a place where they can grow their teaching and professional selves



As of this presentation, they are halfway through this program.

What has worked:

Bring people together regularly, to create a tight-knit group - 4/5ths of educators reported that they feel more connected to their colleagues as a team from these trainings

What hasn't happened:

Use of Slack – educators have said they don't like it

Explicitly invite people to regularly share things that did not work within trainings

What they need to do next:

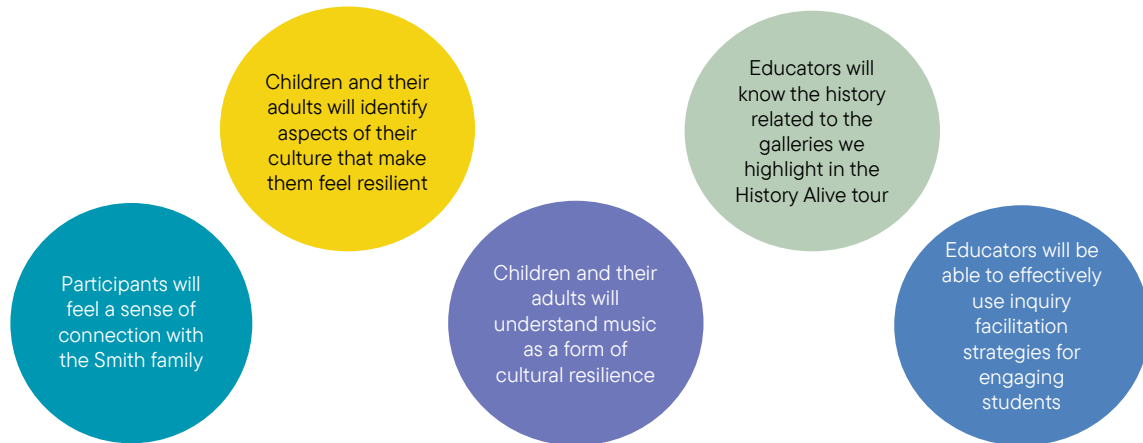
Ideas include: scheduling time for sharing and learning from things that didn't work in every meeting, and discussing what the group can learn from this. Implement a post-tour reflection worksheet, to replace Slack.

Challenges

- This takes **accountability**. Someone that you work with to make sure this is happening.
- This takes **consistency**. Remember your goals, keep working toward them, and keep evaluating (you can change goals, but not mid-way through a program!)

Are there other challenges that you foresee implementing this approach, that you'd like to share?

What are some of your program goals?



Goal language – what will your participants know, understand, feel, or be able to do



What questions
do you still have?

Tools and Resources





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SET GOALS		ALIGN PROGRAMS	
Big idea	Goals	How will you know goals are reached?	Program alignment
<i>Why are you offering this program? What impact do you want it to have?</i>	<i>What do you want participants to know, feel, understand, or be able to do? (Limit to 3 goals total)</i>	<i>What evidence can you see or easily collect that will demonstrate how well your goals are reached?</i>	<i>What elements does your program need to include to achieve your goals and demonstrate this evidence?</i>

IMPLEMENT AND EVALUATE		REFLECT AND IMPROVE	
Evaluation Mechanism	Evaluation Findings	Reflection Team	Plan for improvement
<i>Who is responsible for evaluating the program? How will this be done? (Post-program reflection by evaluator? Observation?)</i>	<i>To what extent were your goals achieved? What worked, and what could have been better?</i>	<i>Who will be part of a post-program brainstorm?</i>	<i>What might you do differently next time?</i>

Evaluation:

Improving Programs and Demonstrating Impact

We all know we need to evaluate our programs, but sometimes we don't have the time or experience to do this right without help. Museum Questions has created four different options to help organizations large and small make evaluation both manageable and useful.

Option 1: Coaching - *Starting at \$500*

New to evaluation but game to try, and want a little support? Museum Questions will coach you through the process. This package includes help clarifying goals and objectives, brainstorming around the creation of your tool, a review of your draft evaluation, and tips for data collection and analysis.

Option 2: Evaluation Development - *Starting at \$1500*

If you need a little more support developing your evaluation before you implement it, Museum Questions will develop a survey or observation form that staff and stakeholders can use to gather data or share program feedback. This package includes help clarifying goals and objectives, the development of a survey or observation form to capture the data you need, staff training in data collection, and tips for data collection and analysis.

Option 3: Tool Development and Data Analysis - *Starting at \$4,000*

With this affordable, not-quite-full-service evaluation option, Museum Questions will develop an on-line survey that staff and stakeholders can use to gather data, and will analyze the data and share findings. This package includes help clarifying goals and objectives, the development of a survey to capture the data you need, and a report with analysis of the data gathered.

Option 4: Full Program Evaluation - *Starting at \$10,000*

Sometimes you know you need an outside evaluator to do a full program evaluation, collecting data from multiple stakeholders in multiple ways. This evaluation may include surveys, observations, and/or interviews, and includes support in clarifying goals and objectives, the development of evaluation tools, data collection, and a report with analysis of the data gathered.

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