

Engaging undergraduates in museum experiences

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My focus today: first 15 minutes

- My background & caveat (UG)
- Informal science education
- Museums and objective knowledge
- Classroom activities—"field trips"
- Non-classroom settings
 - Nature and process of science
 - Paleo field work
 - Collections-based activities & research
 - Exhibit and public program development
 - ISE research (evaluation)
- Discussion (I'll be a facilitator)



Informal science education

- Museums, science centers, zoos, aquaria, botanical parks, nature centers, national parks, etc.
- Wide range of target audiences
- Many educational principles of formal education
 - Inquiry-based learning
 - Different learning styles or modalities
 - Web-based social learning
- Why should you use these in your courses?

Museums and objective knowledge

- Why should students know and understand museums?
- **Objective knowledge**



Why do people come to museums?

1. See the real stuff
2. To interact (touch)
3. To talk with experts
4. Social experience
 - Peers, families, etc.

(Not—to read text panels)



These same attractors will also engage your students.

Classroom activities—field trips

- Most visitors do not understand that the core of museums are their collections
- New trend towards open storage as part of exhibit



Darwin Centre, London



FLMNH

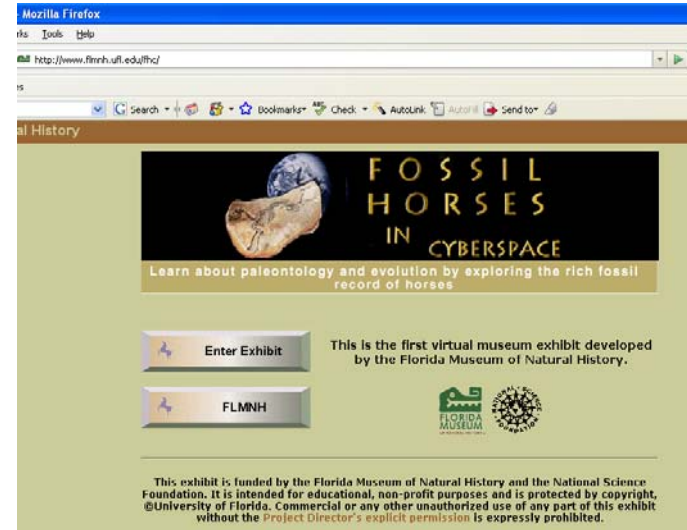
Non-classroom settings--Nature and process of science --Paleo field work



Collections-based activities & research



Exhibit development (real & cyber)



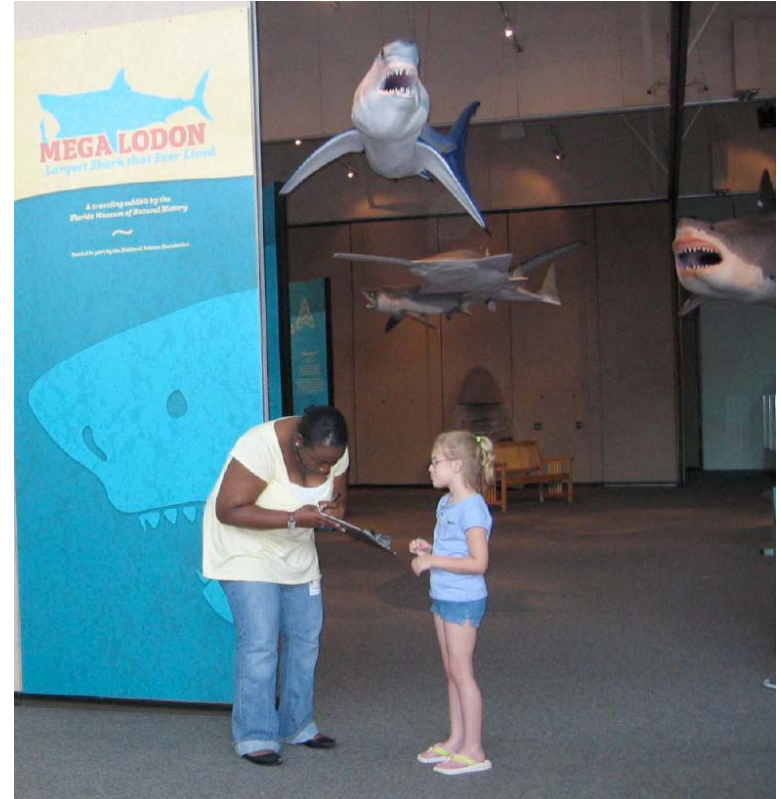
*Megalodon: Largest shark that
Ever lived*



ISE research (evaluation)



Front-end



Summative

Public programs



In museum: Tastes,
Tunes & Treasures



School outreach
Fairfax VA 2008

Why involve undergraduates in museums?

- Diversifies their experience from “normal” classroom and university programs
- Involves them in different kinds of research and activities
- Gets them turned on to, and comfortable with, museums
- Good “broader impact” synergy

Partnerships

- Don't be afraid to ask your local museum or science center to collaborate
- Many are happy to get involved in partnerships (e.g., summer internships)
- Many programs: e.g., REU
- Contact point: Outreach/educator

Discussion (I'll be a facilitator)

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- Do you have a museum, nature, or science center close?
- How have you partnered with it to be a teaching & learning resource?
- What innovative museum programs have you seen?
- What novel programs have yet to be developed?
- What else?