GEM - School Engagement in the "New Normal"
27ᵗʰ August 10am-12pm / South East Museums Service

Thank you for attending the recent GEM webinar with South East Museums Service. Below please find more information about GEM as well as outstanding questions/answers.

If you'd like to know more about GEM events and further engage with our community of museum and heritage educators, please subscribe to the GEM Updates newsletter and explore our website for more information about becoming a member.

Upcoming Courses:
- Foundation Course Online: Museum Learning (Oct 2020 – Feb 2021)
- Intermediate Course Online: Heritage Interpretation (Nov - Dec 2020)
- Intermediate Course Online: Resilience, Leadership and Me (Sept – Nov 2020)

Student/Unwaged Offer:
Current students and unwaged professionals are invited to join GEM at a discounted rate of £25 for a 1-year membership.

Student and unwaged members receive:
- Digital copy of the twice-yearly GEM Case Studies.
- Priority booking for training events including online webinars.
- A minimum 20% discount on all GEM events and training courses.
- Access to our One to One mentor/mentee programme.
- Monthly eNews with exclusive content, news and events and job opportunities.
- Dedicated GEM Area Reps across England, Wales, Scotland and N Ireland.

This offer expires on 30 October 2020 – go to the GEM Membership Portal and join today!

Hannah Sweetapple, Egypt Centre Follow-Up

Who made the templates for colouring featured in your video?

"I make all our templates in-house using Adobe InDesign. I think it is important to stress that I have not got an art background! I learnt how to use this software as part of my MA placement with Oxford University Museum of Natural History. "

Who does your illustrations? The clever cat and finger puppets?

"I do most of these as well on Adobe InDesign. The Clever Cats are one of mine, but the finger puppets were done by our MA placement student from the University of Leicester who was with us last summer."

How did you carry out your talks? How did you go from free sessions to a paid model?

"Our talks are all via Zoom. I think it is important to establish a hard line on what is paid for and what is free. For example, in-house we would usually charge £1 for the craft sessions because we needed to cover the cost of materials. This wasn't an issue with the online ones, but I must add the videos do take a little while to make. When charging for events we stress that they are accessing exclusive content and having live interactions with our expert staff. I think it's important to know your worth and be confident in that."

For your family events, you mentioned that you had to "teach into the void"... Does this mean that the children weren't on microphones or cameras on their end?

"Yes, the children had their mics and cameras turned off due to our safeguarding policies. We communicated with them via the chat function and via polls and activities on screen. This is not a perfect method and takes some getting used to, but it was just what we had to do to adhere to our Museum's safeguarding policies."

For the digital events that you charge for, how do you determine the rates?

"Our rates are agreed across the Museum because we think it's important to be consistent. We look at staff time to create and present the event and what other museums are charging to find out if there is a 'going rate'. Like I mentioned above, it is so important to know your worth. People are paying for your time and expertise and the unique experience you can give them - this isn't diminished because it is digital. "

How are you ensuring that you aren't taking from other museums that offer Egyptian workshops when offering yours over the web? (I think this was from a participant who was feeling nervous about going digital and all of the competition this will create between museums)

"To be completely honest, I haven't been thinking about it like that. Our resources and events are based in our collection and our experience and so are unique to the Egypt

Centre. I am sure this will be the case with everyone's ideas and resources too. Schools and visitors will get something different from visiting you than they will visiting us. The Museum Sector are an incredibly generous and innovative bunch of people and I think it's important not to see one museum's success as another's failure. We are all facing the same things and we can help and support each other through this."

What will your charging model be for virtual classrooms?

"We have decided that we will charge £2 per student. For our onsite visits we charge £3 per student. We have decided that it will be cheaper because we won't have certain costs associated with the visit eg. printing worksheet and fewer staff. We also have some bursary places available for schools who would not normally be able to visit us."

You mentioned photos and 3D exploration... how does that work?

"So due to the condition and age of some of our collection we have always used photos to get a closer look at some of the objects we can't handle. In the Museum this would be a laminated high res photo but now we do it via Zoom using the share screen function. We can also send out these images ahead of time if we want participants to have a look beforehand. Students can then look closely at an image and we use guided object exploration to take an in depth look at the object and what it can tell us about ancient Egypt.

Our 3D objects are a lot more hi-tech. Some can be found here: https://www.flickr.com/photos/swanseauniversity/albums/72157715559865196/with/50248165346/

So here we worked with the Engineering Department in Swansea University to digitally unwrap some of our animal mummies. Hear we can use the videos in the same way as the images to explore the objects. This is interesting because unwrapping mummies to see inside is not something we can do with a class. Some of the mummies are a bit mysterious and so we can pause the videos to discuss what it might be."

Tom Briggs, Bletchley Park Follow-Up

Would you advise teaching into the void for KS1? So much depends on how they are reacting etc…

"I would very much advise *avoiding the void* as much as possible for KS1! Anything you can do to make an activity personable and engaging has got to be a good thing, and this seems to me to be especially true with our younger audiences."

Can you toggle between full and smaller screen share? For example, if you need to have more of a close-up focus on something in your presentation?

"Not quickly, as far as I have discovered so far. In that situation I would probably prepare my slides in such a way as to increase the size of the thing I wanted a close-up on, either with an animation on the current slide or with an enlarged image on a slide of its own. To be honest, this is probably what I'd do when delivering in person as well!"

Can you tell us more about some non-Zoom solutions? As a local authority museum, we're prevented from using Zoom.

 "The ideas I've covered in the blog and in the case study presentation are all independent of the videoconferencing platform (though in the case of OBS Studio an extra plugin needs to be installed). They should work equally well whether you're using Zoom, MS Teams, Google Meet, or any of the other popular platforms!"

Is there a table or chart of which schools use which platform? Microsoft Teams, Zoom etc…?

"I doubt that very much. The most popular frameworks in schools are probably Microsoft Teams and Google Meet because they're both part of very popular digital teaching-and-learning structures subscribed to by schools."

Do you have advice for online safeguarding? For example, as a small museum with volunteers who teach, we need to protect staff etc…

"Much of the general advice for safeguarding is pertinent whether online or off. We have updated the Bletchley Park safeguarding policy to include digital activities. You can find it on the "Essential Information" page of the Learning section of the Bletchley Park website (a direct link to the current version of the document is https://bletchleypark.org.uk/cms/2020/07/Web-BPT-Safeguarding-Children-and-Adults-at-Risk-Policy-updated-210720.pdf). There is a specific section on videoconferencing that starts on Page 27, but there have been adjustments and updates to many other sections to cover relevant digital activities."

Do schools have webcams that show the whole class to the virtual presenter?

"The ones we've worked with so far do, but quality (of both hardware and internet connection) varies wildly! We spent half a session with one of the classes upside down. We still need to work on how best to interact with the students taking part in this context. I've seen different ideas, including teachers acting as a spokesperson for the class, or individual students coming up to the board to talk to us. It's great to get students reacting on-screen; you can ask them to put their hands up, wave, or make other gesticulations to get them interacting!"

Do you have any suggestions on further training on this subject (digital teaching)?

"I included some ideas at the end of my blog post for GEM (https://gem.org.uk/teaching-to-the-void/). Generally, the heritage sector is a bit behind the education sector on this one so if you know any teachers they might be able to point you in the right direction! I find that my network on twitter (feel free to add me and chat: [@TeaKayB](https://twitter.com/TeaKayB)) is really helpful whenever I need pointing in the right direction. There are quite a few (free) online courses focusing on taking your teaching online available on sites such as Futurelearn and OpenLearn. I can't vouch for any specific courses personally, but I have done other courses on both and found them very useful. Two examples to get you started searching are [this one](#) and [this one](#)."