



The Odyssey Hero's Journey

Formative Evaluation

Prepared for the Children's Museum of Manhattan (CMOM)

BLiP research 98 Charlton Street #23 New York, NY 10014 (917) 226-4063

blipresearch@mac.com

November, 2005

Contents:

- I. Introduction
- II. Objectives
- III. Methodology
- IV. Findings
 - Context/Category
 - Navigation
 - Content
 - Defining the exhibit
 - Appeal
 - Exhibit environment
- V. Recommendations

I. Introduction

The Odyssey Hero's Journey

- A new exhibit on Ancient Greece is being developed by the Children's Museum of Manhattan (CMOM).
 - It is slated to open at the museum in late January 2007.
- The exhibit is targeted at 8-10 year olds.
 - Its development supports CMOM's goal of providing extended offerings for older, school-age children.
- A core component of the exhibit will be *The Hero's Journey*, an interactive game/environment based on The Odyssey.
- This exhibit is intended to introduce children to:
 - An ancient story
 - The socio-cultural context in which the story is set
 - Ideas of heroes and heroism in Ancient Greek culture

Development of the Exhibit

- An Exhibition Overview has been developed by museum staff and advisors.
- Experts have been retained by CMOM:
 - Format
 - Interactive gaming
 - Content
 - Ancient Greek civilization
 - Design
 - Museum exhibits
- An initial round of conceptual focus groups was conducted with adults.
 - **DATES/DETAILS TO BE PROVIDED BY CMOM**
- Based on this initial research, a rough iteration of the Hero's Path exhibit activity has been created.

The Need for Additional Formative Research

- Formative research has explanatory power.
 - Can explain why something is compelling (or not) to given audience(s):
 - Characters
 - Setting
 - Content
 - Format
 - Can help to identify/remediate issues prior to further development/investment
- Conducted at up to three stages during property development:
 - Concept (completed)
 - Focus on appeal, attention and enjoyment in order to inform overall property development.
 - **Rough-Cut (current)**
 - **Tests prototypical iterations to examine the following *prior to* further investment :**
 - Appeal
 - Usability
 - Engagement with curricular/content objectives
 - Interaction with media/platform/technologies.
 - Developed Execution (future)
 - Tests a nearly completed iteration to ensure that it succeeds in appeal and content goals.

Formative Research Partner

- CMOM retained **BLiP research** to complete an integrated program of qualitative research with children in the target age range.
- **BLiP research** is a full service, New York-based, independent research and consulting firm.
 - **BLiP research** specializes in analyzing:
 - The youth/family market
 - Media
 - Technology
 - Educational interventions

II. Objectives

Three Core Objectives

- The research explored three interrelated areas of inquiry.

Usability	Content Acquisition	Appeal
<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Transparency of use:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Navigation• Directives• Environment• Exhibit Elements• Take-Aways	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Comprehension of content:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Characters• Action• Location• Cultural Context• Themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Engagement with exhibit elements:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hero's Path• 'Interactive' <i>Hero Stations</i> Game• Hero Record Card• Wall Text

III. Methodology

Research Design

Methodology	Scope
Focus Group Interviews	4 groups
Participant Observations	23 individual observations

- In order to meet the above stated objectives, **BLiP research** implemented a program of qualitative research.
- The research design combined two methodologies.

Sample

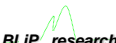
Group #	Respondents	#
1	2 nd -3 rd Grade Boys	5
2	2 nd -3 rd Grade Girls	5
3	4 th -5 th Grade Boys	5
4	4 th -5 th Grade Girls	8
TOTAL		23

- The research was conducted on site at CMOM on November 12 and November 13, 2005.
- The sample was recruited through:
 - CMOM membership lists
 - CMOM classroom outreach
 - CMOM web outreach postings
 - Peer-to-peer connections
- All participants were provided with incentives for participation:
 - Free passes for future museum attendance
 - Educational manipulatives
 - A certificate of participation

Protocol

- All research was conducted by **BLiP** Children's Research Specialists.
- Each research session lasted approximately 75 minutes.
- Focus Group Interviews and Participant Observations were conducted according to the following protocol.
 - The research process was introduced
 - A contextual discussion followed
 - Focus on museum attendance and visitation behaviors
 - Participants were introduced to the iteration of the exhibit activity
 - Instructions were provided solely regarding specific use of “hero stations”
 - Children’s release into the exhibit activity was staggered
 - Children were allowed to navigate the exhibit as they saw fit
 - Participants were observed during their navigation through the exhibit activity
 - Verbal, physical, and learning-based behaviors were noted in observation worksheets
 - A group discussion followed regarding content delivery, usability, and appeal
 - Participants brainstormed formatting recommendations for future exhibit iterations

Research Instruments: Focus Group Interview Discussion Guideline



BLiP research

phone: 917-226-4063
blipresearch@mac.com

Discussion Guideline CMOM Exhibit: November 12/13

I. Introduction: (5 minutes)

- Independent research
- Opinion questions: no wrong answers
- Want to hear from everyone
- Introduction: Name and age

II. Category Context-Museum Visits: (15 minutes)

We're going to be talking today about what you do when you go to museums, how you act, how you move through the exhibits, what you like to look at.

- Who has been to a museum recently?
 - Which one?
 - When was that/How long ago?
- What exhibit did you see?
- How did you make the decision to go? What drew you to go to that exhibit?
 - [PROBE:] School, parent, or self-directed?
 - Describe/define power of each.
- Who went with you?
- Did you all go to look at the same thing?
 - Did you stay together once you were there?
 - Describe who went where.
 - Describe how these decisions were made.
- Describe what happened when you were at the exhibit you viewed:
 - What did you look at first?
 - Then what?
 - What drew you to those things?
 - What kept you from approaching/investigating other aspects?
- [If parent was along with them] What did your parent do during this time?
 - [PROBE:]
 - Did they read the text?
 - Explain things to you?
 - Direct you where to go next?
- [If parent was not along with them] How would it have changed your experience to have your parent along?
 - Improvements?
 - Negatives?

- [If siblings were along with them] What did your siblings do during this time?
 - [NOTE: distinguish between older and younger siblings:]
 - Did they read the text?
 - Explain things to you?
 - Direct you where to go next?
 - Work independent of you?
 - Ask for your assistance?
- [If sibling was not along with them] How would it have changed your experience to have your sibling along?
 - Improvements?
 - Negatives?
- Do you think you learned things from that exhibit?
 - If so, what?
 - How do you know?

III. New Exhibit-Walk Through/Observation: (25 minutes)

Now we're going to be looking at part of a new exhibit that this museum is working on. In just a minute, I'm going to lead you over to where the rough version of the activity is set up, but first I have to tell you a few things:

- Rough version: not the finished product.
 - Just meant to give you an idea of what this activity will be like.
 - Think more about the ideas. Don't get too stuck on how they're presented.
 - Provide an example here, i.e. Hero Stations
- We're going to give you some guidelines, but we want you to walk through it like you would an exhibit at a museum.
 - No right or wrong way to approach it.
- Your opinion and how you go through the activity is really important to the people that are making it so we'll be watching and taking notes as you participate.
- We'll be around to answer questions should you have them. Introduce staff.

WALK THROUGH

IV. Discussion on Usability (30 minutes)

Now that you've had a chance to walk through the activity and try it out, I want to talk to you about what you thought of it.

Content:

- What was it about? For each: HOW DID YOU KNOW THIS?
 - What was the story?
 - Who were the main characters?
 - PROBE: Odysseus: What was he like?
 - What did they do?
 - Where did they go?

Research Instruments: Focus Group Interview Discussion Guideline

- Where did the story take place?
- When did it happen?
 - [PROBE:] Ancient Greece
- What did you learn about Ancient Greece/The Ancient Greeks?
 - What was important to them? [PROBE:]
 - The sea
 - The Greek Gods
 - Oral tradition/storytelling
 - Hospitality

Execution:

- How would you describe that activity?
 - [PROBE:] A game.
 - Did it seem like a game?
 - Why or why not?
- What were the different parts of the activity?
 - Which ones did you like most?
 - Which ones did you like least?
- Did you know where to go?
 - How did you know?
 - PROBE: Directives (arrows, signage, etc.)
 - What worked well in terms of telling you this?
 - What was confusing?
- Did you know how to play?
 - How did you know?
 - PROBE: Directives (arrows, signage, etc.)
 - What worked well in terms of telling you this?
 - What was confusing?
- What was the object of the activity/game?
 - Is there a clear mission?
 - Is this an interesting mission?
 - How do you feel about your sense of having accomplished this mission?
- What about the writing?
 - On the path:
 - What did you think of it? How would you describe it in terms of the following:
 - * Level of enjoyment?
 - * Level of engagement?
 - * Age appropriateness of style/content/vocabulary?
 - o Were there parts that were too easy?

Were there parts you didn't understand?

- On the story panels:
 - What did you think of it? How would you describe it in terms of the following:
 - * Level of enjoyment?
 - * Level of engagement?
 - * Age appropriateness of style/content/vocabulary?
 - o Were there parts that were too easy?
 - o Were there parts you didn't understand?
- On the hero stations:
 - What did you think of it? How would you describe it in terms of the following:
 - * Level of enjoyment?
 - * Level of engagement?
 - * Age appropriateness of style/content/vocabulary?
 - o Were there parts that were too easy?
 - o Were there parts you didn't understand?
- What did you think of the images on the path?
 - What did you like about them?
 - How could they be improved?
- Was the game fun?
 - PROBE: how much fun was each of the different portions
- What about what happened at the end?
 - [PROBE:] Payoff/printout HERO CARD
 - How important was that?
 - What did you think of the way it looked?
 - Was there enough information on it?
 - * What else should be on it?
 - * What shouldn't be on it?
 - o PROBE: Should it give you all the correct answers?
 - o PROBE: Language on cards: Loyal, Clever, Guts, Famous

Format:

This is just a rough idea of what the exhibit might be like. I want you to brainstorm what kind of things could they do with the following elements of the exhibit. What should these best look like?

- Lighting
- Sound effects
- The environment
 - Place
 - Props
 - Setting
 - Background/backdrops
- Other things

THANK YOU!!!

IV. Findings

a. context/category

Museum Visit Expectations

- Target age children have **strong entertainment expectations** when visiting a museum exhibit intended for them. They expect:
 - Games/Computer Games
 - Interactive kiosks
 - Built environment
 - Sound
 - Visual imagery
 - Tactile/Hands-on opportunities
 - Take-aways
- They also desire opportunities for deeper exploration:
 - Text
 - Books
 - Computers
 - Artifacts

Museums are Learning Opportunities

- Children expect to learn when visiting museum exhibits.
 - Learning is endemic to engagement with the category.
 - This is both a positive and a negative finding.
 - Children are excited about opportunities for learning new information
 - They dread rote, unidirectional learning in which they are lectured to
- Children expect learning opportunities in museum exhibits to be presented in varied, multifaceted, and compelling ways.
 - **The “best” kind of learning feels like no learning at all**

Adult Involvement Varies

- In “adult oriented” museums (i.e. Metropolitan Museum of Art, Museum of Modern Art) adults lead children through exhibits, reading aloud or pointing out elements they consider interesting.
 - This approach has its limitations, as the learning and involvement feels unidirectional to children.
- In “child oriented” museums (i.e. Museum of Natural History, CMOM, Museum of Television and Broadcasting) children take the lead and move through exhibits at their own pace and with their own path.
- Adults follow as spectators or support.
 - Children prefer this process as it allows them multiple points of access
 - It also provides the sense that they are in command of their learning process.

b. exhibit activity navigation

Navigation Path was Transparent

- Children were generally aware of the navigational path through the Hero's Journey exhibit activity.
 - The physical path directed them
 - The hero stations were numbered sequentially
- Whether or not they chose to follow this path varied depending on their personalities and their perceptions of the goals of the exhibit activity (more below).
 - **Most children did not read the text on the Hero's Path.**
- Children throughout the tested age range felt capable of navigating the exhibit activity on their own.
 - They did not require or desire adult guidance

Navigation



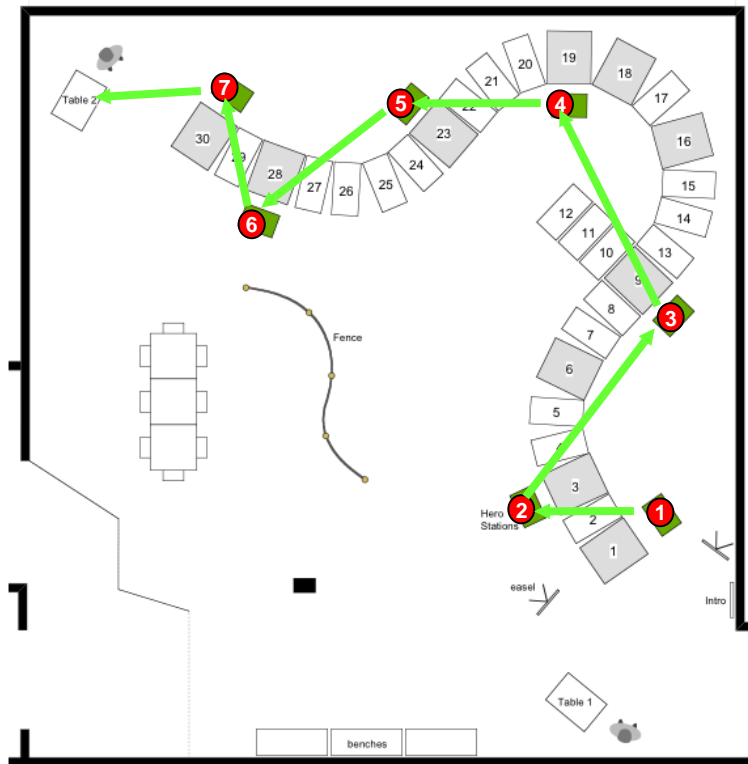
- As noted above, children's release into the exhibit activity was staggered.
- In order to simulate "real life" use, once all members of each test group were released, they were asked to share the space as they would in a actual exhibit.
- Children followed one of three paths through the exhibit...

Linear Navigation



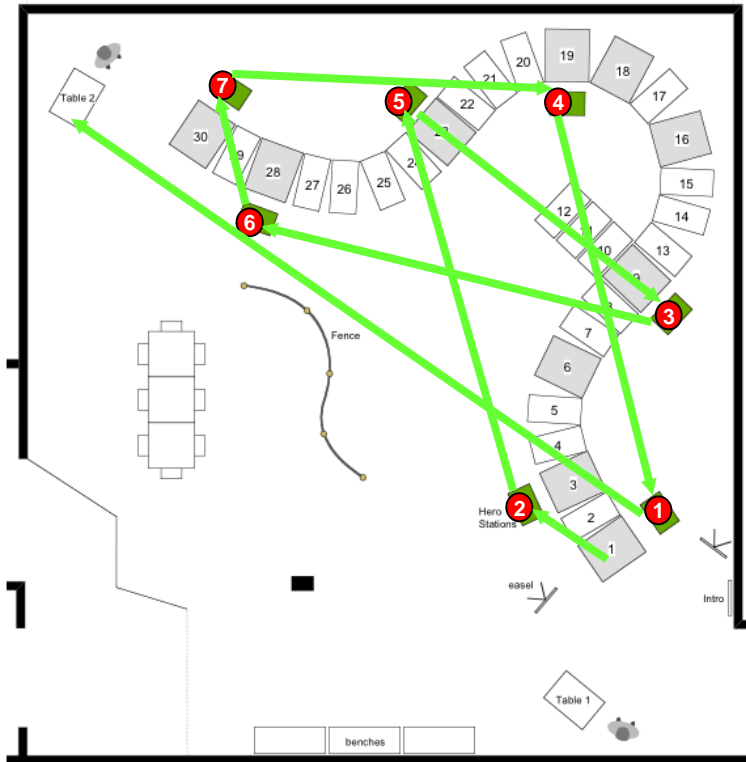
- These children followed the path from the beginning, reading each space in order.
- When they reached a hero station, they paused and engaged in the activity.
 - If the hero station was occupied, they waited until it was free.
- Following participation in each hero station, they returned to the path and continued reading.
- They completed the path and hero stations sequentially.

Linear Hero Station Navigation



- These children followed the sequence of hero stations in a linear fashion.
- When they reached a hero station, they paused and engaged in the activity.
 - If the hero station was occupied, they waited until it was free.
- Following participation in each hero station, they moved to the next one.
- They often ignored and/or were uninterested in the path.
- After completing all of the hero stations, some of these children read portions of the path, moving through it with varying degrees of linearity.

Non-Linear Hero Station Navigation



- These children completed all of the hero stations, but did so in a non-linear fashion.
- They moved among the hero stations at whim.
 - If a hero station was occupied, they usually moved on to an unoccupied one.
- Following participation in each hero station, they moved to another one.
- They often ignored and/or were uninterested in the path.
- After completing the hero stations, some of these children read portions of the path, moving through it with varying degrees of linearity.

Additional Navigation Behaviors

- Many younger children, and/or children who had seemingly not yet developed strong literacy skills, had trouble reading and comprehending the text in the hero stations.
 - This did not seem to diminish their interest in or ability for participation.
- Interaction between participants was quite limited during their initial walk through the activity.
 - Some children, boys in particular, did speak with each other regarding their answers, but this interaction seemed to come solely *after* they had completed the entire path.
- After receiving their hero cards, many children looked back at the hero stations to examine their answers in light of their scores.
 - Interaction between participants increased significantly during their second venture through the activity.

Directives Require Clarification

- Children felt that clearer directives needed to be provided for **how, when, and why to collect content** from the path:
 - Why they should traverse the path (goals, objectives, etc.)
 - How to traverse the path
 - The connection between the path and hero stations
 - How and when to engage with the hero stations
- Children were also confused by the directives in the path that informed them to advance or move back a set number of spaces.
 - Without any other consistent mechanism for advancing, these felt illogical and pointless.

Travel vs. Event

- Children questioned the lack of distinction between those spaces on the path that described **travel** and those that described an **event**.
- This fact created navigational and perceptual confusions for participants.
 - Children viewed the path as pertaining to travel
 - Children viewed the hero stations as pertaining to events/challenges
- **Thus the relationship between the Path and Hero Stations was often unclear**

Providing a Map

- Many children suggested that their navigational issues could be remediated in part through the inclusion of a map or maps.
 - These maps would chart Odysseus' path from Troy to Ithaka.
 - They suggested these maps could be posted:
 - Along the walls
 - Within the steps on the path
 - At each hero station
 - Children strongly suggested the using the convention of **dotted lines** representing the path, and **stars** for current placement
 - This would allow participants to track their progress through the journey

QuickTime™ and a
TIFF (Uncompressed) decompressor
are needed to see this picture.



c. content

Basic Content Acquired

- Regardless of age, reading ability, or navigational style, following participation, nearly all children had acquired the following information about the exhibit activity:
 - It was about something that happened a long time ago
 - It took place in Greece
 - It was about a man traveling on a ship with a crew
 - He was having an adventure
 - He met a Cyclops
- It should be noted that children did not come away from the exhibit activity with any additional awareness of The Odyssey's existence as a oral or written narrative.

Second Level Content Comprehension

- Some children garnered additional content from participating in the exhibit activity. This generally included the following:
 - The action revolved around a man returning home to his wife/family/palace after having been to war.
 - There were gods and goddesses involved
- It should be noted that some children came into the research project with existing knowledge of Ancient Greece and the story of Odysseus.
 - This content knowledge was most often gleaned from having viewed the films *Troy* and/or *Alexander*.

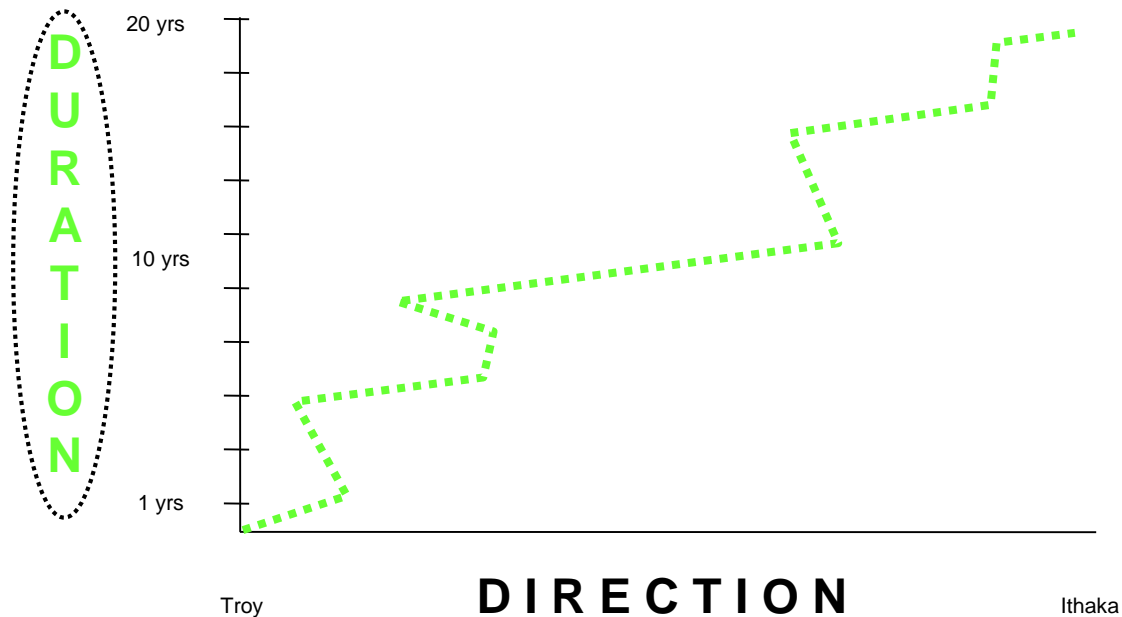
Ancient Greece

- Once the location and time period of the story were identified (Ancient Greece), children were asked directly about what was important to people in that time and place. The following were the most common answers:
 - Gods and goddesses
 - Power
 - Boats
 - Wine and meat

QuickTime™ and a
TIFF (Uncompressed) decompressor
are needed to see this picture.

Two Axes; One Comprehended

- While children generally understood that Odysseus was on a path toward somewhere, they did not have any understanding of the amount of time taken up by this journey.
 - They thus understood one axis in the story: **DIRECTION**
 - They did not see the second axis in the story: **DURATION**



d. defining the exhibit activity

Clearly a Game

- Following exposure children across age and gender groupings described the exhibit activity as *a game*.
- Children defined the exhibit activity as a game because it contained the following category-specific elements:
 - A path
 - Compelling content
 - A need to think and to solve problems
 - “Right” and “wrong” answers
 - A sense of adventure
 - The provision of a “score” at the end

Video Games as a Model

- Children in this age range derive many of their assumptions about games from their experience with video games.
- They approach gaming experiences with set expectations:
 - Clearly defined goals
 - Delivered at the start of the game
 - Exploration
 - Collecting (valuable) information en route
 - Advancement through increasingly difficult levels
 - A sense of achievement
 - Rewards for achievement
- While it is not necessary to emulate all of these conventions, it would be wise to be mindful of them.

Unclear Object

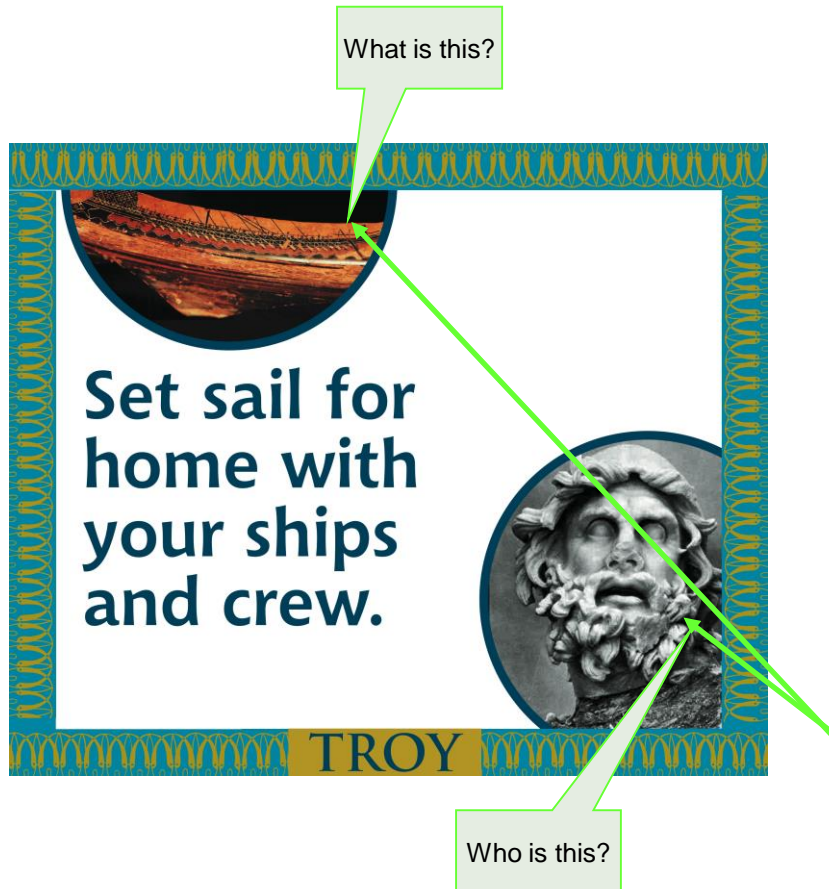
- In playing the Hero's Journey game, children were generally not aware of how or on what they were being scored.
- Notably, they rather enjoyed this fact, as they felt it prevented them from being unduly influenced in choosing their answers.
 - This lack of clarity kept the questions focused on **how they would personally respond**, rather than **how they would respond if playing a particular role** (i.e. brave warrior).
- Yet they felt they needed to be told overtly what the **goal** of the game was (i.e. finishing a journey, being a hero).
 - They felt that the scoring system in the game needed to be tied to this goal.

e. appeal

General Appeal Was High

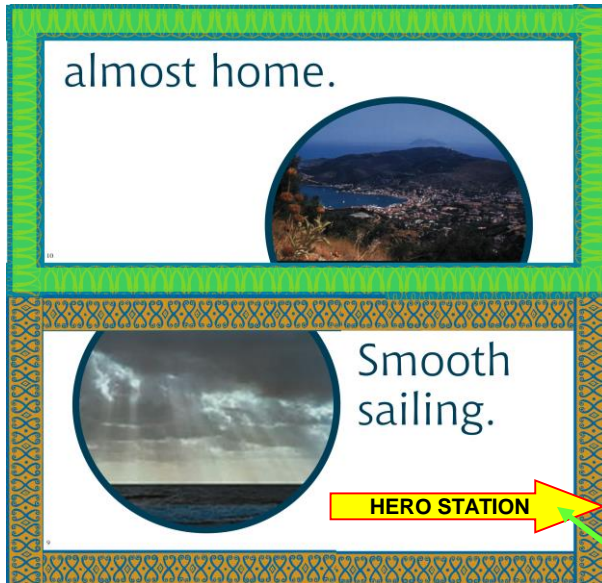
- The exhibit activity was highly engaging overall
 - It generally fit well with the museum-going expectations of children in the target age range.
 - It motivated participants to develop many actionable hypotheses for enriching it.
- Children felt that the topic was intriguing and rich.
 - It contained the possibility to deliver multiple layers of information and multiple points of access.
- The gaming aspect was particularly compelling.
 - The sense of adventure hooked children in
 - The novel and intriguing content led them in
 - The need to problem-solve drove and helped maintain their involvement

Hero's Path: Content



- Children enjoyed the combination of text and images in the path.
- As noted above, the majority of children did not read the path.
 - Those who did generally felt that the text was accessible and age appropriate.
- Children liked the mix of images.
 - Ancient/contemporary
 - Places/things
- They felt this assortment of images should be more consistently varied.
- They enjoyed the direct participation implied by the second person voice.
- They suggested that the images should feature captions or explanations for those interested in further exploration.

Hero's Path: Function



- Children liked the idea of a narrative pathway made of distinct steps.
- Children took issue with aspects of the path's functionality. They wanted:
 - **An introduction alerting them to the object of the path and game, including: a clear reason to read the path.**
 - Ways to collect bits of information and build a body of knowledge
 - How this knowledge will be used/tested
 - Information on:
 - The nature of the path/journey
 - The characters/locations (including pronunciation keys)
 - The visual cues they should be searching for along the way
 - Enhanced connections between the content of the path and that of the Hero Stations.
 - A visual distinction (i.e. different border) between the steps connected to travel, and those connected to action or adventures.
 - Further directives regarding when to participate in a Hero Station.

Hero Stations: Content

1: SACRIFICE TO ZEUS
Make an offering for a safe journey.
What will please the gods?

Your crew appreciates it, but Zeus wanted better.

Zeus smiles on your offering!

Ignoring the gods makes Zeus angry!

HINT
For help before you choose, spend a coin and lift this flap. Remember, you only have a few coins.

- Children enjoyed the direct participation implied by the second person voice.
- They liked being asked to solve problems.
- They had strong suggestions for improving the stations:
 - Have the path's content better reflected in the questions
 - Organize the questions & hints more around **content-based problem solving**.
 - Helping them pull together content from the exhibit
 - Not only providing emotional answers
 - Provide additional levels of questions for deeper learning on subsequent plays.
 - Provide a means to clarify the language in the stations.
 - Deciphering unfamiliar language was limited by:
 - A lack of contextual clues
 - Limited connection to the Hero's Path.

Hero Stations: Function



- Children were strongly drawn to the “computerized” multiple choice template.
- They particularly liked the following:
 - The sense of achievement derived from solving problems.
 - The idea of being able to pay for clues.
 - Especially re: **conserving** coins
 - Having fewer coins than stations
 - Returning to the stations after completing the path to examine
 - Correct answers
 - Unused/unexplored “hints”
- They had clear suggestions for improving the stations:
 - Clarify the hero rewards concept:
 - **Define the game’s goal**
 - Do not define scoring categories
 - Provide more than 7 stations
 - Add additional, increasingly difficult levels (like a video game)

Hero Record Cards: Content



- The Hero Record Card concept was a resounding success.
- Children loved the following:
 - Having their individual answers tallied
 - The personalization of the photo
 - The size/scale of the card
 - Suitable for framing/posting
 - Being scored or rated
 - The possibility of “beating” this score
- Children had the following suggestions for improvement:
 - Provide additional hero categories
 - Generosity
 - Strength
 - Problem Solving
 - Create a rating scale (1-5) for each category
 - Award a sliding scale of points within each category based on conservation/use of coins
 - Provide additional scoring arenas and opportunities (i.e. money, life points)
 - Alert them to questions that were answered “incorrectly” to focus additional attempts

Hero Record Cards: Function



- The Hero Record Card gave the activity **tangible** and **personal value**.
 - It provided a concrete manifestation of their sense of achievement
- By recording children's attendance and performance, it served to motivate subsequent visits
 - To collect additional records
 - To "beat" one's score
 - To correct one's mistakes
- Children suggested that it could also motivate them to **drill down** for more information by:
 - Asking additional questions
 - Providing suggestions on where to find more information
- Some children felt it could take the form of a passport or ATM card that could be reused on multiple visits
 - This would allow users to "pick up where they left off" (as in a video game)

Wall Text: Content

THE ODYSSEY IS A POEM about the Greek hero Odysseus. After ten long years fighting for the Greeks in the Trojan War, Odysseus wanted to come home to Ithaka. He knew that his beautiful and clever wife Penelope was faithfully waiting for him, and he was anxious to see his son Telemachus, who was only a baby when he left.

As Odysseus traveled home, he ran into many challenges, and it took him many years. Some problems he could solve using his own intelligence, but others were too difficult for him to solve on his own. Sometimes he made good decisions, but other times he made mistakes and had to accept the consequences.

Join Odysseus on his journey and find out if you have what it takes to be a real Greek hero.



- Very few children read, or even approached, the wall text.
 - For many, it was invisible: not noted
- They felt the text itself was:
 - Not visually compelling
 - Too small
 - Uninteresting looking
 - No images
 - Unbroken
 - Low contrast
 - Not accessible (if viewed)
 - Too difficult
 - “For adults”
 - Paced at a level above their eyes
- As such, they generally didn’t comment on its different “voice”.
 - Those that did found it confusing and antithetical to their experience.
 - Children want to see themselves as the hero of the story
 - They do not want to be the hero’s son

Wall Text: Function

JOIN ODYSSEUS on his journey and find out if you have what it takes to be a real Greek hero.

Walk the Path

Begin in Troy and journey all the way to Ithaka. Stop in each space to discover what happened to Odysseus on the way home.

Make Choices at Hero Stations

Are you a Hero? Find out at Hero Stations along the path.



Check in with the staff person at the beginning of the path for help using the Hero Stations.

At each station, make a choice, then lift the flap and take a card. If you want help making a choice drop a coin in the slot.

Give all the cards you take to the staff person at the end of the path to find out if you are a hero!

- The wall text felt disconnected from the exhibit activity
 - The activity centered on the Path and Hero Stations
 - The wall text was not referenced here
 - It thus did not serve a clear function
 - *NOTE:* This may be partially resolved once the exhibit environment is built and there are additional things on the walls.
- Children were interested in places to **drill down** for more information.
 - With remediation, the wall text could serve this function
 - Children will have to *want/need* to seek it out
 - They wanted additional information to be displayed in digestible bits: “fun facts”
- Wall text could also be directed at parents/adults.
 - Children have an expectation of the presence of such panels
 - Conversely, **they enjoy attending exhibits on their own**, feeling they are more for them

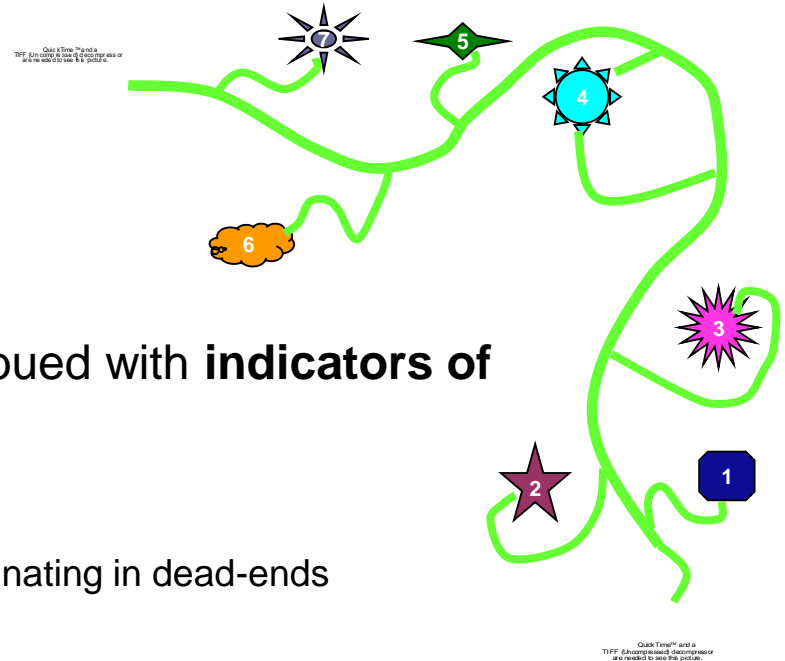
f. exhibit environment

Environment=Experience=Achievement

- Children want their experience of this exhibit activity to be one of complete sensory immersion into the world of the story.
- They also want all of the environmental details to be (potentially) relevant to “solving” the problems posed in the Hero Stations.
- **They desire a fully integrated experience, like a video game, in which environment informs and supports experience and achievement.**

Physical Environment

- Children desired a **greater physicality** in the Hero's Path.
 - A winding trail that represents the journey
 - Over a blue-green floor (representing the ocean)
 - Winding, **surprising** paths that lead to each hero station or adventure
 - Distinct built environments for each hero station or adventure, i.e.
 - Boat
 - Cyclops' cave
 - Giant's island
 - Circe's island
 - Sirens
 - Scylla/Charybdis
 - Apollo's island
 - Palace
- Children wanted the path to be imbued with **indicators of their own physical adventure**
 - Paths going under, over, around things
 - Steps, slides, tunnels, etc.
 - Paths connecting to each other or terminating in dead-ends
 - A feeling of traversing past obstacles



Wall Space

- As mentioned above, many children felt the walls should contain maps illustrating Odysseus' path.
- They also felt that the walls could contain the following:
 - Two/three-dimensional representations of story elements
 - Child-friendly (large print, illustrated, visually stimulating) text boards or interactive kiosks providing additional information about:
 - Characters
 - Situations
 - Settings
 - History
 - Cultural context
 - Artifacts from Ancient Greece
 - Peep-holes they could look through to see images/dioramas from the story
- Children anticipated that these elements would provide another layer of “hints” to help them solve the problems in the Hero Stations.

Sound/Lighting Effects

- As part of creating an integrated experience, children had a strong desire for sound effects. These included:
 - Water
 - Waves
 - Whirlpools
 - “Voices” of the characters
 - Cyclops growling
 - Giant footsteps
 - Circe singing
 - Wind
 - Storms
- They also wanted visual effects such as:
 - Darkly lit caves
 - Zeus’ thunderbolts
 - Stars
 - Sun

Supplemental Materials

- Children wanted (and expected) that there would be additional exhibit-related materials and activities for them to engage with during or following their participation. These included:
 - Computer terminals
 - Delivering deeper information on
 - Gods/Goddesses/Heroes/Monsters
 - Myths
 - Ancient Greece
 - Odysseus' past and future beyond the Path
 - Allowing them to replay the Hero Station game at more advanced levels
 - Books (on the above topics)
 - Hands-on activities
 - Make/Paint-your-own Greek pottery
 - Artifacts

V. Recommendations

Provide Clear Objectives

- Children generally felt that the navigational path of the exhibit was quite transparent.
- Yet they felt that it lacked a clear **introduction/rationale**.
- The **exhibit activity objectives** were thus unclear.
- This influenced their style and goals in navigating the exhibit

INTRODUCTION/OBJECTIVE

- Describe the Journey
- Introduce the Characters
- Provide a Visual Key
- Define the Activity's Goals/Objectives

Focus on the Quest

- Children see their role in this activity as that of a treasure hunter
 - They are searching for clues that will allow them to unlock the correct answers to the questions at the Hero Stations.
- They like **the effort of the quest** as it heightens their sense of:
 - Being challenged
 - Solving problems
 - Being able to dig deeper for further information

THE QUEST

- Adventure
- Achievement
- Iterative Growth/Mastery

Create an Integrated Experience

- For children in this age range, the conventions of interactive activities are shaped by their experience with video games.
- In these games, every aspect of the environment has the potential to inform and support learning and achievement.
 - Narrative
 - Characters
 - Encounters
 - Sound
 - Images
 - Location
- The content in this exhibit often lacked a direct connection to the goals/objectives of the activity.

INTEGRATED EXPERIENCE

All content should inform:

- **The Story**
- **The Hero Station Challenges**

Provide Layers

- Children in this age range desire opportunities to dig deeper and gain mastery. This is reflected in two related behaviors:
 - Finding out more about a topic that interests them
 - Revisiting an activity once they've gained additional experience
- Children in this age range approach novel information from a wide range of skill sets and areas of interest, all of which must be provided for.
 - Visual
 - Physical
 - Textual
 - Auditory
 - Environmental
 - Experiential

LAYERS

- **Multiple Points of Access to Content**
- **Additional Sources of Information**
- **Opportunities for Revisiting Activities**

Keep it (School-Age) Child-Centered

- While exhibits for younger children often require parental guidance, children in this age range have a strong desire to *do it themselves*.
 - Including the suggestion that the activity will require parental guidance has the tendency to age the exhibit activity down.
 - **School age children will be alienated by activities that feel too *young* or *babyish*.**
- As with video games--a platform school-age children feel they “own”-- this exhibit will best succeed if it provides older children with a sense of ownership, control, and self-sufficiency while remaining challenging.
 - Using a second person voice to place each child as the story’s protagonist is a excellent example of this practice.

SCHOOL-AGE CHILD-CENTERED

- **Just For Me (NOT for babies)**
- **Accessible but challenging**
- **I’m The Star**