



DUNDAS
MUSEUM &
ARCHIVES

DISCO

“I learn!”

Museum Immersion: A Classroom Curation Project!

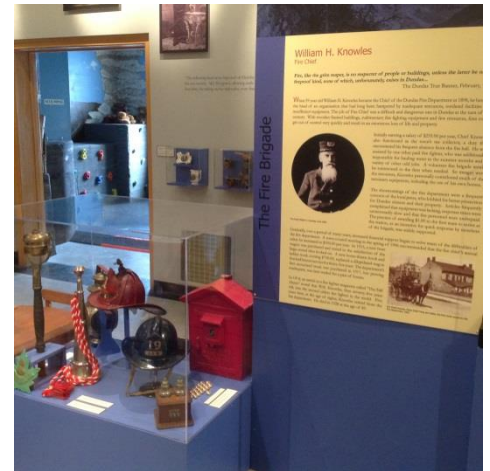
This education program complements all Social Studies and History Curriculum

Ever wonder why it's those museum-type people who get so excited about history? And seem to know so much about it? Not just dates and lineage and who won which battle. But the significance of an event or the contribution an historical figure made to his or her community. Well, there's a good reason why these people get that way: they enjoy the opportunity to curate exhibitions for the public at the museum.

And now you and your students can, too!

It's through the process of creating a display that museum curators *immerse* themselves into the past. It's much more than just reading about

the impact of the first Europeans on First Nations people from a textbook, or watching a video documentary about the Halifax Explosion. It's even more than visiting a museum and seeing an exhibition about the World War I battle at the Somme. While these pursuits are certainly worthwhile, they are largely passive activities; your students are, essentially, spectators. Here's a great opportunity to be a protagonist: create – *curate!* – your own exhibition!



Curated exhibition of early fire-fighting in Dundas: which artifacts are significant? What is the primary source evidence for wall panel information about Chief William Knowles?



Going to school in 19th century Dundas: slates, abacus, samplers and a popular teacher!

Curating an exhibit is a project for your students that will turn your classroom into a space that all the moms and dads will be buzzing about the next time you host Parents' Night. And, for your Social Studies and History curriculum, this undertaking will bring your students to an intimate, hands-on relationship with the past.

This education program at the Dundas Museum and Archives challenges your class to work as a team of museum curators; your classroom becomes home to exhibits that relate to your history or social studies curriculum. What a great opportunity to bring history to life, and offer other students in your school an exciting and vibrant tour through important events in the past.



Victorian fashion exhibit curated in the DMA's Feature Gallery:
how can space and lighting be used to advantage?

While this curation project is a wonderful deviation from the usual assignments of writing an essay or making a Power Point presentation, it is not without its particular challenges. A spirit of inquiry will pervade this endeavour from the very beginning: Which topic will be explored? How will this be divided into sub-topics? What artifacts will be selected for display and where will we secure them? What kind of space do we have and how is it best utilized? What about lighting? Photographs? Labels? Wall panels? How will our audience interact with the exhibit? Will there be a guide? Or a self-guided audio tour? A hands-on interaction with the exhibit?

A pre-visit activity in your classroom conducted by Professor Picone will use *The Dundas Train Station* as an artifact to develop in your students the skills of “reading” an artifact carefully and designing meaningful questions about people, events and objects from the past. Working carefully with some of the concepts of *Historical Thinking* is essential, especially concerning historical significance and primary source evidence.

Once at the museum under the careful guidance of DMA Director of Education, Professor Picone, your class will discover all that’s involved in the art of curating a museum exhibit. They will have the opportunity to work with several curated exhibits at the museum to derive the important questions and considerations the curator needs to address in preparing an exhibition. DMA Collections Manager, Mr. Sindile, who curates the galleries at the DMA, will also be on hand to answer questions about the challenges he faces when curating a new display in the Feature Gallery.

As a final activity, students will be given a number of related artifacts and some archival documents and have an opportunity to practice curating a small display. Through this activity, your students will come to an appreciation of the artifact and archival resources that are available at their community museum.

An added incentive? The Dundas Museum and Archives has several Community Curator display cases. Perhaps one of your classroom exhibitions will be good enough to be displayed at the DMA for the whole town to enjoy!



Will one of your classroom curations be exhibited in
this display case at the DMA?