

## Brown Bag virtual school tours: February 1, 2021

### What are some of your main takeaways from your experiences giving or supporting tours on Google Meet?

Naomi Haugen, AAG: I was the first guide to do a Google Meet tour. A couple things to share: a little nerve-wracking not to have the link until RIGHT before the tour! That was hard and disconcerting. I did practice with family and with kids. When I was showing slides, I couldn't see participants--so that is why the other person has to manage the slides. One fluky thing, on Google Meets, happened when trying to adjust the view--I had it maxed but it still was missing some of the kids, so the teacher helped to call on them and Kara did as well. All in all, it worked equally as well. First-graders raised their hands to be called on and they were very accustomed to answering this way. The kids knew how to mute/unmute. It worked very well!

Elizabeth Winga, docent: Ditto on everything Naomi said. Just one thing to add. When I was experimenting, I tried different devices. Sound was not good on my older desktop. Now I use a laptop that is a computer. In my tour, I was also dependent on the teacher calling on the students.

Josie Owens, docent: I did Google Meet tours at the Weisman. One thing to be careful about, the middle button is the hang-up button, so be careful not to hit the red handset button! I used the chat with the students, so it was nice to let them write something they observed, and I could look at the notes while they did that. Chat was a great way to "call" on all the kids and have them participate. Plus, I got to see their art. Like the others, I could only see some of the students. The videos that we share were also fun--they loved some of the videos I showed them. Some things are very beneficial or better in giving virtual tours.

### What works best to engage students when the tour is projected in the classroom?

Naomi Haugen, AAG: On my preschool tour, they were watching me on a large TV screen. In the classroom projection, I wasn't able to call on them by name. So the teacher was EXTREMELY helpful and the teacher called on the students for me. Worked out really well to have the teacher help. Teacher had the laptop and screen displayed, so it was difficult for kids to know where to look.

Barb Mikelson, AAG: In my tour, the images were projected on the large screen at the front of the room. And the room was darkened, so students were at a distance and the teacher had to call on them. I couldn't even hear them, so the teacher had to repeat, and and there was no need for paraphrasing. In retrospect, the teacher just didn't let me respond to the student who commented, and I didn't have time

to interject before the teacher moved on to another comment. Sometimes then, I had to summarize a whole bunch of comments.

Alison Ross, AAG: I did some tours for Good Shepherd. I just wanted to say that my daughter did a Mia tour in November, and she still says kids refer to that day. For the kids, this was a VERY exciting time to have a tour. They could see themselves on the screen, too, and that got them fired up. For my tours, they were projected on the white board in the classroom. The tours were great. It was hard to see the students, but teachers were amazing and could take over in whatever way you'd like. Kids were very excited to participate.

Cara Richardson, AAG: I also had a Good Shepherd tour. We were projected but I couldn't see ANYTHING. It was audible, though, so that went well, and I got the info from the audible. I could hear the kids' voices, and I actually got to know students' voices, so it worked out fine.

Debbi: Maybe we can suggest that the teacher turn the laptop around so we could see students. Some teachers are not as adept with the technology. To engage the whole room, ask kids to raise their hands or thumbs up/down to engage them with opinion questions.

## What works best to engage when connecting to students in distance learning situations?

Elizabeth Winga, docent: I used some movement activities through my tour. I asked students to stand up on one foot, for example, and had a couple more movement breaks through the tour. I tried to creatively put those in the tour.

Barb Mikelson, AAG: When I was showing the Japanese cranes screen, I had children stretch their arms out and do wingspans. And the teacher said it was perfect because they had math next and they would be measuring things!

Debbi: What have you experienced with cameras off or on?

Naomi Haugen, AAG: Kids had their cameras on. With first graders remote, they sat and looked at me. They were very serious about it. Teacher was really into it, but not so much the kids. With pre-schoolers, they were totally into it.

Elizabeth Winga, docent: I've realized I'm a visual communicator, so it's hard when I can't see the audience. I like to see them because if they start to fidget, I know it is time to move on to something else.

Question: How do you settle kids back down? After you had them move around?

EW: I just gave the direction to sit back down and then I had a new image for them to look at.

Josie: Or you could give them a countdown to bring it to an end.

Debbi: I was on a middle school tour, and they were asked twice to turn on the cameras. We need to be sensitive that this is their choice to not have the camera on.

Kara: Also remember that students may not have their camera on because of the strength of their home WiFi system or what environment they may be in while on the tour.

Lisa Mayotte, docent: I noticed that if kids are not in the classroom, the teacher was also trying to get attention of students often. Kids are in all kinds of situations at home when they connect.

## Any other tips or techniques to share for slides?

Question: What objects have worked well for engaging students?

Elizabeth Winga: Soundsuit: Objects are not so different from what I used in person. Lots of good supporting objects.

Jean Marie Burtness, docent: One homerun for my tour of 2nd grade students was the painting of the steamboat on the Mississippi. Students recognized the landscape as similar to Lake Pepin--and I asked "What might it be like there?" That for a landscape worked really well.

Diana Beutner, AAG: For videos, select ones without an ad. Otherwise, the ad runs and that is distracting.

Angie Seutter: We looked at the Mary Lee Bendolph quilt, and I asked What stands out, what did they notice. Since they were learning from home, a lot of them were already wearing a blanket wrapped around them, so they could connect. I asked What would they like for their blanket, what materials or colors. They shared some nice associative experiences.

Diana Beutner, AAG: We can use formatting in Google slides to shorten the video or clip it with what we want shown.

Elizabeth Winga: I try to connect to teachers about what is happening in the classroom, so that helps develop or frame the theme for Highlights tours.

Naomi: For Preschool tours, incorporate lots of movement. Lunchtime impacts them. They just reached a point where they were restless, and the teacher said they had to go.

Cara Richardson: First tour, teacher didn't show! She had COVID.