

## Casing an Informal Learning Exhibit: Revised Scott Simpson :: EDTEC 671 :: March 2011

On a vacation this week with my family, I visited the Valor in the Pacific Museum at Pearl Harbor. I was delighted to see that not only are many of the exhibits brand new, they make great use of various technologies ranging from a hands-on decryption machine to audio devices that cue information with codes, to a very well-done 3-screen multimedia video presentation. Even the 'boring' static maps had overlaid textures and Braille for low-vision visitors that aligned with what sighted visitors could see. It occurred to me that this would aid a sighted visitor in helping a non-sighted visitor to experience the map.

Most visitors seemed to be immediately engaged by the hands-on aspect of the exhibit, and I think the multimedia aspects of it kept their interest. The featured video presentation (with 3 screens) packed the tiny theater for each showing. The video summed up the idea of what I think the exhibit was meant to communicate. Throughout, it showed the attack on Pearl Harbor from both the Japanese and American sides, and introduced information I had never before heard. The presentation used a timeline metaphor to tie together the events of December 7th, to illustrate how quickly it all happened.

The exhibits participate strongly in the 'knowledge' learning outcome of the taxonomy developed by the Institute for Museum and Library Services. They largely seek to engage the learner in finding out some factual information about the build-up to the bombing of Pearl Harbor. Some of the exhibits also 'affective' in that they seek to not only humanize the Japanese and American soldiers, but also to try to convey the sense of complete confusion that surrounded the two hours of bombing.

