



# Cultures of Learning: Evaluation Practice and Use through a Living History Service Learning Partnership

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# Vermilionville Living History Museum and Folklife Park

Local, Regional, and Historical Context

- Opened to the public in 1992 in Lafayette, Louisiana
- Represents three distinct cultures of the Attakapas region of Southern Louisiana from 1765-1890 CE: Acadian (Cajun), Creole, and Native American

# Vermilionville Living History Museum and Folklife Park

Local, Regional, and Historical Context

*Vermilionville aims to provide visitors and the community with a greater understanding and appreciation of these cultures through its celebration of local language, music and dance, traditional arts, historical artifacts, botany, historically accurate costuming, folk beliefs and customs, cuisine, and traditional holidays and festivals.*

*(Vermilionville, 2015)*

# Vermilionville Living History Museum and Folklife Park

Local, Regional, and Historical Context

- On the Vermilionville property:
  - Seven historic homes from the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century
  - Six historically accurate replications: a chapel, ferry, barn, outdoor kitchen, forge, and schoolhouse
  - Artisans and employees in historically accurate clothing demonstrating traditional crafts and economic activities

# The Vermilionville Education Enrichment Partnership (VEEP)

The Program (and Partnership) as Evaluated

- Began in 2012
- Service learning partnership between Vermilionville, the University of Louisiana at Lafayette (UL Lafayette), and the Lafayette Parish School System (LPSS)

# The Vermilionville Education Enrichment Partnership (VEEP)

The Program (and Partnership) as Evaluated

- Pre-service elementary and secondary school teachers in social studies and English/language arts
- Development, implementation, and reflection on writing-intensive interdisciplinary lessons

# The Vermilionville Education Enrichment Partnership (VEEP)

The Program (and Partnership) as Evaluated

*“The essence of the original program has really endured throughout: creating a service learning opportunity and giving public school kids an opportunity to have a field trip that is relevant to their curriculum requirements.”*

*“[VEEP reminds] people that museums are places for learning, and can be places for active learning—they’re not just a free-for-all field trip where kids just go wild and miss a day of school. They can be incredibly enriching and relevant for them.”*

*(Melanie Harrington, Vermilionville Education Coordinator)*

# Evaluating VEEP

What evaluative practices are already in place?

*“I’ve always been interested in getting feedback for any project that I’ve ever been involved in. As a teacher, [...] I knew how hard I had worked, but I wanted to know if that hard work was effective [...]. [For VEEP,] I want it to be something that’s useful and that’s meaningful, that can be a win-win for everybody involved. And if we don’t get some type of evaluation feedback, there’s no way for us to measure that.”*

*(Melanie Harrington, Vermilionville Education Coordinator)*

# Evaluating VEEP: Formative

How can the program/partnership improve?

- Development, sharing, and revising of lesson plans
- Observations of pre-service teachers' lesson implementation
- Informal conversations during “VEEP Days” among Vermilionville staff and UL Lafayette faculty

# Evaluating VEEP: Summative

How did each VEEP Day/semester/cycle go?

- At the end of each VEEP Day:
  - Student survey: eight Likert-type scale items to rate how much they learned about the cultures and the village
  - Teacher survey: ten open-ended questions about the lessons and their curricular impact, relevance, and quality

# Evaluating VEEP: Summative

How did each VEEP Day/semester/cycle go?

- At the end of each VEEP Day:
  - Pre-service teacher survey: eleven open-ended questions about the lesson planning, implementation, and revision process
  - Assessment of completed lesson plans by UL Lafayette faculty

# Evaluating VEEP: Developmental

How can we work together to help VEEP evolve?

- Debrief meetings with Vermilionville staff, UL Lafayette faculty, and LPSS staff (e.g., instructional strategists)
- Review and discussion of formative and summative data
- Planning together for next steps for VEEP Days and program as a whole

# Evaluating VEEP

What evaluative practices are already in place?

*“[B]ased on evaluation feedback and those discussions [with Vermilionville staff, UL Lafayette faculty, and LPSS staff], which we have at least once a year, [...] that’s how things have gotten tweaked [...]. [These tweaks] allow us to be flexible to meet everybody's needs as best as we can anticipate.”*

*(Melanie Harrington, Vermilionville Education Coordinator)*

# Current VEEP Practices

Where is the program/partnership now?

- Pedagogical development of pre-service teachers
- Creation of educational resources
- Interdisciplinary collaborations
- Expanding audiences
- Increased awareness of resources

# VEEP in the Future

Where is the program/partnership going next?

- More collaboration with Vermilionville staff and artisans
- Adding to educational resources
- More formal evaluation process
- Continuing to share findings and learning from other museum-based programs

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