

In the Summer of 2017, our community college library had the opportunity to partner with a local historical society to produce an exhibit about the history of the college in the society's welcome center. With no dedicated archivist or outreach librarian, two research and instruction librarians with prior archives experience were tasked with leading and implementing this project with little precedent. The exhibit, *Northern Essex Community College: The Early Years in Haverhill*, was created with materials from a relatively new archival collection that is still in the early stages of development. Most of the collection is minimally processed without finding aids or consistent inventories. In order to create this exhibit, we had to inventory and identify potential archival sources for display, address preservation concerns, obtain display equipment, coordinate installation with the historical society, work with college public relations, and plan an opening reception. With future outreach exhibits anticipated, we will use what we learned during this process to make subsequent outreach exhibits easier to plan and execute.

Blunders

Best Practices

Successes

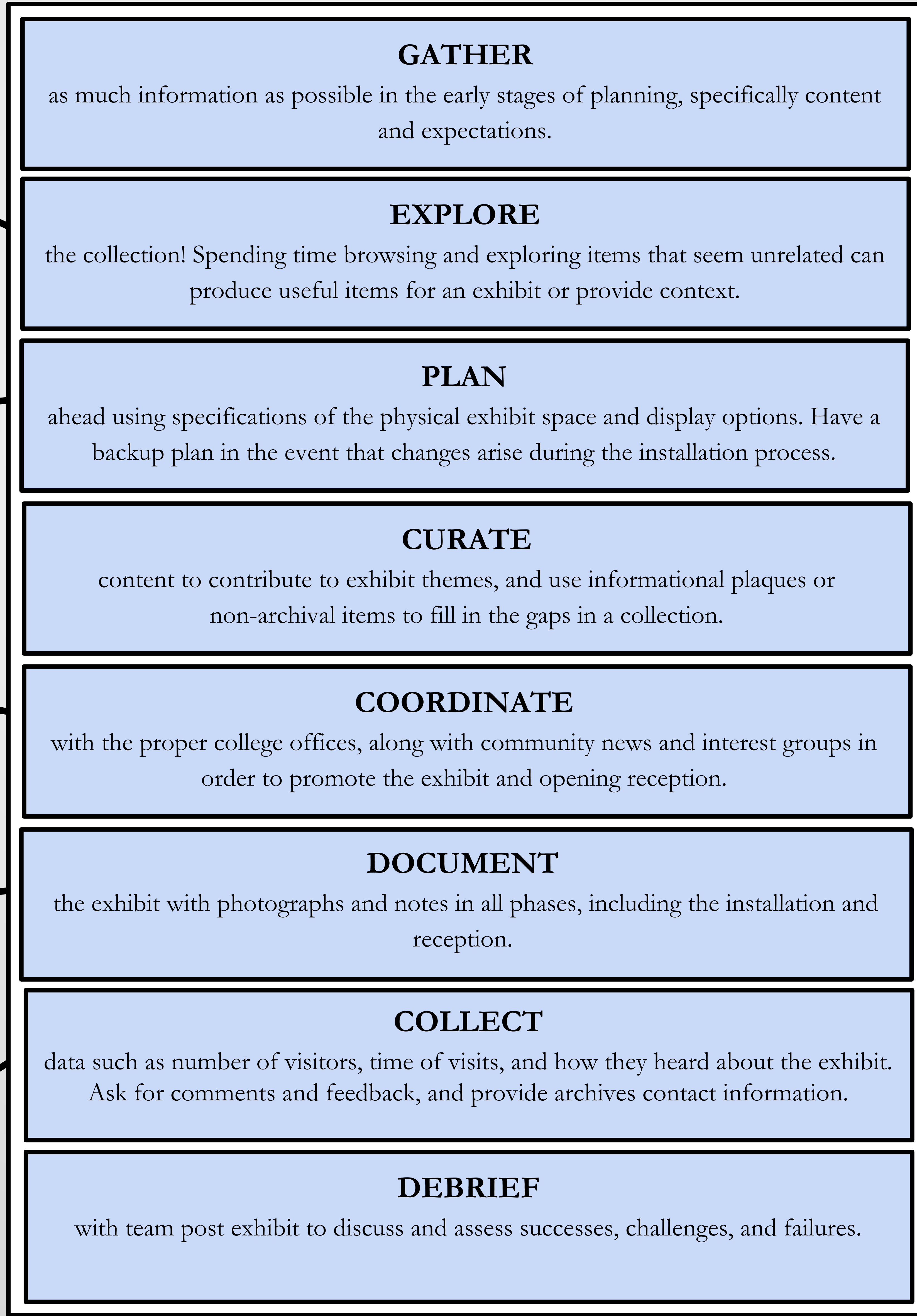
SCOPE: Our archives are minimally processed and roughly arranged chronologically. There were large gaps in the exhibit, as those gaps exist in the collection. One of the biggest issues we encountered is that many photographs are unlabeled, making it difficult to identify and label individuals or exact dates.

SPACE: We did not have the exact dimensions of the exhibit space and were unaware that there were only a limited number of secure display cases available for our use. These factors required us to alter our original plans during installation, and limited the quantity and type of archival items we were ultimately able to display.

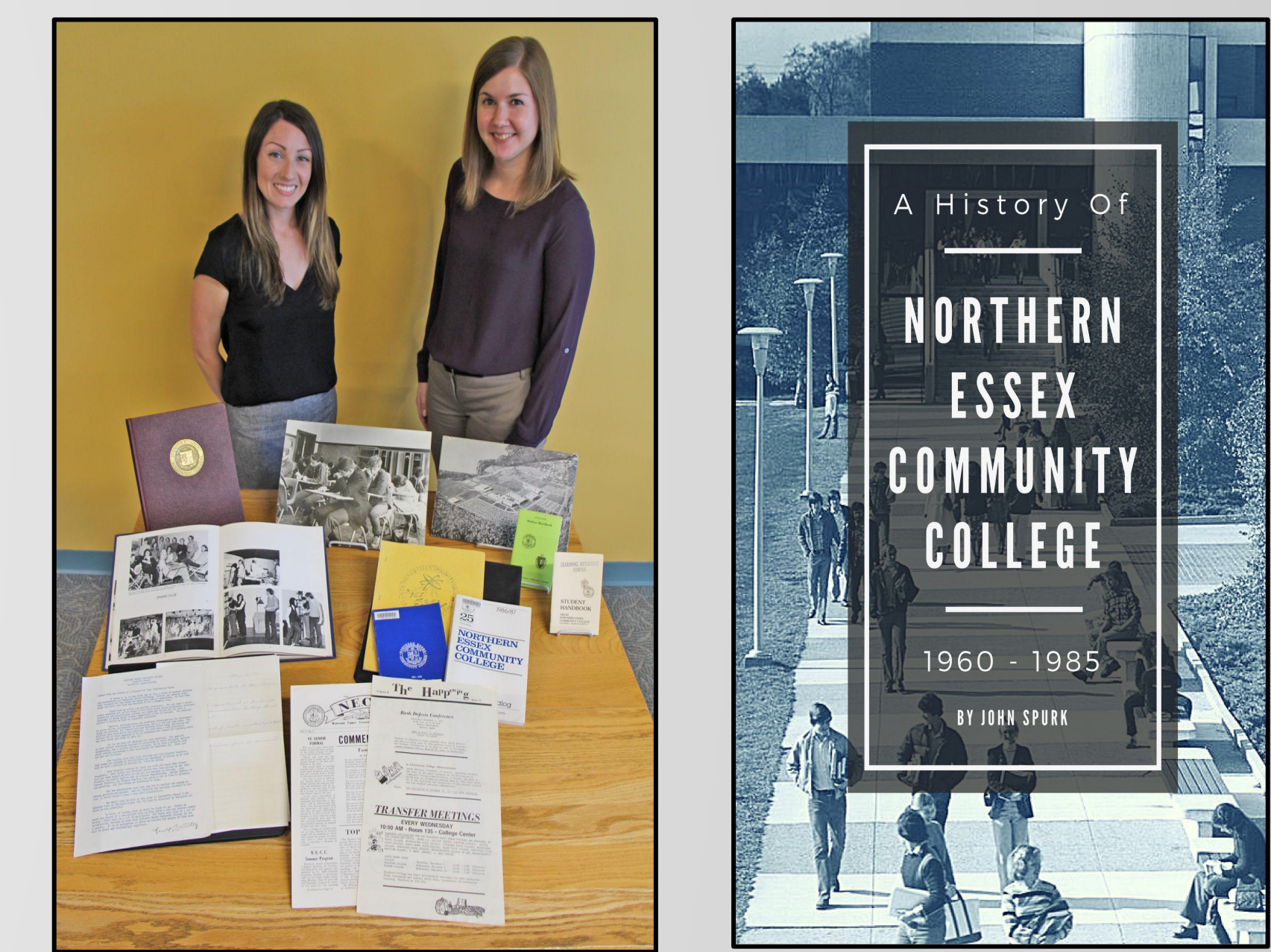
PROMOTION: Only a select portion of the college community attended the exhibit opening. Greater coordination with the colleges' PR Department, Alumni Association and local newspapers may have allowed for promotion to a broader audience.

VISUAL DOCUMENTATION: There are few photographs of the completed exhibit in its entirety. Although we have photographs from the college's PR Department, the *The Eagle-Tribune* (a local newspaper) took a large number of photographs and we do not own the rights to them.

DATA COLLECTION: There is very little data surrounding our exhibit, specifically the number of visitors, time of visits, and feedback about exhibit content. This information would be beneficial for assessment.
FEEDBACK: Alumni and emeritus faculty at the exhibit provided information about specific photographs and artifacts displayed, and having a plan or mechanism for recording this valuable information would have ensured it would be added to our records.



COLLECTION: Creating the exhibit, especially during this exploration phase, gave us a greater understanding of what our archive contains. We found we had complete runs of the student yearbook and newspaper yet we are lacking administrative correspondence and items pertaining to faculty members.



SPURK BOOK: Our exhibit coincided with the publishing of a book about the history of the college. The two related events helped to provide context and reinforce the value of archives in the college and local community.

ARCHIVAL DONATIONS: The exhibit created greater visibility of the library and archives. Several current and former faculty members have donated materials, and have been instrumental in providing information about the history of the college.

COMMUNITY INTEREST & TIES: There has been an increase in archives visits and inquiries from alumni and community members who have a connection to the college. Many have cited the exhibit as the reason they decided to reach out to the library.
INVITATION TO CREATE ANOTHER EXHIBIT: College administrators have asked the library to curate another exhibit for the homecoming celebration this fall.