

**AFS Professional Development Session for Students and New Professionals:
Presenting Yourself on the Academic and Public Job Markets 1**

Thursday, October 20, 2005

8:15-10 a.m.

Dr. Tim Evans, Western Kentucky University
Dr. Marcia Gaudet, University of Louisiana at Lafayette

Report prepared by Margaret T. McGehee, Emory University

This document reports on a professional development workshop for graduate students and new professionals in the field of folklore studies sponsored by the AFS at its 2005 annual meeting in Atlanta. The Folk and Traditional Arts Program of the National Endowment for the Arts provided funding for this workshop.

The purpose of this professional development session for students and new professionals was to address the following questions:

- How do you present your professional goals, accomplishments, and potential contributions to employers inside and outside the field?
- How can you effectively plan for the job search process?
- How can you become successful at the many parts of this process, including preparing a CV, performing in interviews, giving job talks, schmoozing, and gaining appropriate knowledge and skills in the first place?
- What are the similarities and differences among the search processes for academic, public, and independent contractor positions?

Tim Evans and Marcia Gaudet initially reminded attendees of these overarching questions and stressed that this session would be an informal discussion that would allow attendees to ask questions as they arose. Tim and Marcia each provided a thorough handout (see attached) with tips and suggestions for presenting oneself on the public sector folklore and academic folklore job markets, respectively.

PUBLIC SECTOR FOLKLORE POSITIONS

Public sector folklore positions tend to be more plentiful than academic positions, and folklore students should strongly consider seeking jobs in that market, whether for temporary or permanent work. Tim noted that the items needed to obtain either a public sector or academic job are similar. They include a curriculum vitae (CV), letters of recommendation, and a portfolio of experience. He offered several suggestions for making oneself marketable, including the following:

- 1) Experience: An internship, short-term contract work, volunteer work (at museums, local festivals, etc.), or coursework in areas related to the job (e.g., public folklore; photography; arts administration; grant-writing) demonstrate that you have been active already in the public sector arena or have skills and knowledge that you can bring to a job.
- 2) Knowing who is out there and what is out there: Tim suggested that identifying the major institutions in one's field and getting an understanding

of the infrastructure of public folklore can provide a job applicant with a better sense of the public sector realm. He also recommended joining listservs (e.g., Publore, Museum News), perusing websites (e.g., www.museumcareers.org), and looking at the *Public Programs Bulletin* (in hard copy or online) for a sense of what organizations and jobs exist in the public sector realm.

- 3) Attending conferences and making contacts at those conferences: This is a good way to get a sense of your field and to get your foot in the door for certain jobs.

Tim reminded attendees that public folklore jobs exist within a variety of institutions, including arts councils, museums, historic preservation organizations, parks, libraries, and archives, and that it is therefore important to look for job announcements in a variety of places. The applicant should understand the differences between these various organizations or groups and have an understanding of how each functions. It is also important for applicants to research the organization to which they are applying in part to determine whom they might meet and with whom they might interview. Finally, Tim stressed that applicants should be sure to aim an application to the particular job that they are seeking.

ACADEMIC FOLKLORE POSITIONS

Marcia continued the discussion and offered tips for how applicants can make themselves attractive candidates for academic jobs. Her suggestions included the following:

- 1) Attend conferences: Echoing Tim's comment that conferences are a good way to make contacts, Marcia reinforced that if person has met you or seen you give a paper at a conference, that connection can help you get your foot in the door.
- 2) Mentors: If your mentors know colleagues at the university to which you are applying, you should ask if they would call those people and put in a good word for you.
- 3) Coursework: Some jobs require a candidate to have a certain number of credit hours in a specific field or discipline of study. During the course of your studies, be thinking about taking an ample amount of credit hours in your respective field, or try to pick courses that are cross-listed in a way that can count towards those hours.

Marcia also offered advice regarding the interview process. She emphasized the need for a candidate to be genuine. When interviewing for a job, she said, "let their behavior be your guide." You should try to pick up on what they deem is "professional behavior" and then act accordingly; the same principle holds true for how to dress for an interview. Marcia commented that interviews for folklore positions tend to be more informal but that, again, the behavior and appearance of your interviewers should give you a sense of the degree of formality or informality.

The remainder of the session was devoted to questions from the session attendees. Those questions and responses by the session leaders follow:

If you want a teaching job, should you “keep your foot in the door” by teaching?

Marcia responded that the more teaching experience you have, the more luck you will have on the job market. It is, however, difficult to teach and be on the job market at the same time.

Is adjuncting for an extended period of time a bad idea? Does it make you unattractive as a candidate?

You need to justify to yourself why you are doing it. It is very easy, Marcia commented, to get overwhelmed with teaching and to drift away from scholarship.

Should you avoid teaching at a community college? How do institutions view teaching experience at the community college level?

Community colleges pay better than adjunct positions and offer a much better financial situation to instructors. However, they can require a heavy teaching load on the part of their instructors. At the same time, community colleges may offer you the chance to introduce a course, such as an introductory folklore class, that would be attractive to future employers. Finally, Marcia stressed that it is important to attempt to keep your summers free so that you will have time to work on publications.

How many job applications should you send out?

There is a temptation to send applications to any and all jobs that seem of some relevance to your work, but Marcia warned against sending out an excessive amount (e.g., 70). A more reasonable number of applications will allow the applicant to do the background research necessary for tailoring each job letter to a specific institution or organization. Also, you should apply to jobs in places/locations where you would be willing to move.

In the interview process, what kinds of questions are asked?

Be prepared to discuss your background and the skills that you can bring to a job. Tim pointed out that at a research-focused school or organization, they might ask how you see yourself fitting in. They may ask hypothetical questions, such as what you would do in a certain situation. In academic job interviews, they usually ask what your ideal or “dream” course would look like.

How appropriate is name-dropping in an interview?

Marcia responded that it is fine to mention your mentors in the interview and, in fact, you should have mentioned them in your application or letter. It is also acceptable to mention those with whom you have had classes.

If asked a question about which you know nothing, is it OK to point out that it is irrelevant? If it is an inappropriate question, is there a tactful way not to answer?

You really cannot point out that a question is irrelevant; it is always important to be gracious. If someone asks a personal question that is not relevant to the job, usually someone on the interview committee will step in and remind the group that such questions are not acceptable. If no one on the interview committee re-directs after an inappropriate question, you can say that you prefer not to answer the question. You

never have to respond to a question that is inappropriate or too personal. Note: The MLA's *Job Information List* has a section on Information and Guidelines for Job Seekers that lists "Do's" and "Don'ts" for interviewers and interviewees.

What things should one not do in an interview?

Don't complain about the graduate program you are/were in or about your current job. This leads to conclusions that you are not easily pleased or ever happy. You should be ready to discuss why you are leaving a job—why do you want to make a switch from an academic job to a public one? Why do you want to switch departments?

This question led Marcia to discuss more specifics about the process of applying for academic jobs. She stressed that a letter of application should be accurate and balanced; you should not be too boastful, but you should highlight what you can bring to the job (as opposed to what the job will provide you). It is best not to discuss how you want to change the program of the place to which you are applying; rather, express your creativity in terms of what you would like to expand on what the program is already doing or what new courses you would like to add.

You should spend a great deal of time crafting your letters of application, and you should ask your mentors to read them. The same holds true for the letters of recommendation that have been submitted for your dossier. You should ask your adviser to read over those letters and make sure that they will not raise any flags to potential employers. Tim stressed as well that you should keep in touch with your adviser after graduate school so that s/he knows what you have been doing since graduation and so that s/he can continue to write detailed, up-to-date letters of recommendation. There is nothing wrong with asking your letter writers to update older letters, but you should keep them abreast of your most recent activities.

Marcia emphasized the need to make your application materials easy to read. A search committee is most likely reading your materials quickly. Tim emphasized the importance of avoiding jargon in your application, especially for public sector jobs.

In sum, it is necessary to strike a balance in your application—avoid being too informal and avoid being pompous. Marcia reinforced her earlier point that you should be genuine; don't be shy about stating your strengths but don't brag either.

What is the importance of publications for getting jobs?

Publications give you a notch up, but a strong chapter or writing sample can demonstrate to a potential employer your potential for publication. Publications can range in type and content and can include more than academic journal articles (e.g., pedagogical pieces, public folklore articles).

Should you vary topics for conference presentations, or is it OK to present different slices of the same project?

Presenting on the same topic does not pose a problem, but you should not present the same paper. It is good to have a focus, but it is also appealing for departments if you have published in different disciplines to show that you are able to move between them.

If you create and make public a website during graduate school, where do you put that skill on your CV?

List it in the publication section or high enough on your CV to be noticed.

How valuable is it to have taught on-line courses?

This form of teaching experience can be very valuable as it is in part an indication of technical experience and expertise. You should always try to mention any technological expertise you have, such as having used programs like Blackboard in your teaching.

**AFS Professional Development Session for Students and New Professionals:
Presenting Yourself on the Academic and Public Job Markets 2**

Saturday, October 22, 2005

8:15-10 a.m.

Dr. Tim Evans, Western Kentucky University
Dr. Marcia Gaudet, University of Louisiana at Lafayette

Report by Margaret T. McGehee, Emory University

The purpose of this professional development session for students and new professionals was to address the following questions:

- How do you present your professional goals, accomplishments, and potential contributions to employers inside and outside the field?
- How can you effectively plan for the job search process?
- How can you become successful at the many parts of this process, including preparing a CV, performing in interviews, giving job talks, schmoozing, and gaining appropriate knowledge and skills in the first place?
- What are the similarities and differences among the search processes for academic, public, and independent contractor positions?

Tim and Marcia began the session by giving attendees two thorough handouts (see attached) providing tips and suggestions for presenting oneself on the public sector and academic folklore job markets, respectively. Marcia mentioned a recent article in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* in which the author suggests the need of PhD programs to encourage more fully student's interaction with the public. Marcia stressed that such interaction has become a "plus" on the job market and that service to the community has become a factor in evaluating faculty.

ACADEMIC JOB MARKET

Marcia first provided audience members with suggestions for how they can get more involved in their profession, including attending conferences, introducing themselves to

people at those conferences, and giving papers at conferences. This involvement, she stated, will demonstrate to potential employers that you are working towards establishing citizenship in your profession and that citizenship in your department will most likely be important to you as well. She also emphasized that it is helpful to have secondary areas of interest so that you are not limited to applying only to folklore departments. This is not essential, but a secondary interest will show that you can teach a variety of courses. Furthermore, not all academic folklore jobs are located in folklore departments; as in her case, the folklore program is located within the English department.

The teaching portfolio has become an important component of academic job applications. This portfolio includes a philosophy of teaching statement, essentially 1-3 pages in which you describe what you see as your role as a teacher. Writing such a statement is a good exercise for preparing yourself for the job market. In it, you should strike a balance between theory and practice.

PUBLIC SECTOR JOB MARKET

Tim encouraged attendees to keep their job options open in terms of both academic and public sector folklore jobs. Public sector folklore positions tend to be more plentiful than academic positions, and folklore students should strongly consider seeking jobs in that market, whether for temporary or permanent work. He offered the following tips for making oneself marketable for public sector jobs in particular:

- Demonstrate that you are a good fieldworker, and show your experience. That experience may have come through an internship during or after graduate school or through volunteer work (e.g., museums, festivals).
- Know the public folklore “world” and its infrastructure: subscribe to listservs such as Publore; join the Public Folklore section of AFS and attend their meeting at AFS; look at the Public Folklore Bulletin (hard copy or on-line version); surf websites to find out what various programs are doing.
- Attend conferences and introduce yourself to people. Have a business card to hand them.

Marcia further encouraged attendees to join professional societies, including national groups (AAA, MLA) and regional associations (MELUS, SSSL, SASA). Regional meetings are smaller, and it is easier to meet people. These organizations typically have slots at national conferences for panels. Tim echoed Marcia’s point and pointed attendees to similar public folklore organizations and meetings, including AASLH, FITS, and state organizations such as the Louisiana Folklore Society.

At this point in the session, Tim and Marcia opened up the session for questions. Below is a list of questions asked by attendees as well as the session leaders’ responses.

If you are interested in reviving an academic department’s folklore program, should you send a letter to that department stating your interest?

You should find out first what is going on in that department with the program. There may be a folklorist on staff that already be trying to do that.

Should I expect that before I have established myself I will have to move to northern Utah or Alabama, for example?

Moving is still the best way to get a job; flexibility is always a good thing. A few years of adjuncting in a place where you want to be is not a bad idea, but you have got to find time for publishing. It tends to be easier to get a second job than a first. The first job in both academic and public realms is always the hardest to find and to get.

Tim emphasized that many different organizations have public folklore jobs, including arts councils, museums, historical sites, non-profit groups, parks, etc. It pays to know the jargon of each type of organization and what those groups are about. It also helps to know who is on staff, what projects they have done, and the general infrastructure of each place. In her 2000 article in *Folklore Forum*, Peggy Bulger in fact stresses the importance of knowing the culture and lingo of different institutions.

Tim also raised the point that coursework, especially classes in grant-writing or museum studies, will indicate that you know certain things about the public realm. If your schools do not provide such workshops, it would behoove you to take any workshops offered on such topics, particularly grant-writing workshops. Divisions of state humanities councils often offer such workshops.

What do you do if you have not published much before completing your degree?

For academic jobs, you should at least try to do some presentations. Entry level jobs do not expect you to have a long list of publications. Rather, aim for good presentations and good publications. One publication in a highly respected journal can show your potential, as will a writing sample (one good chapter of your dissertation or thesis). Ask your adviser or mentor to vouch for your potential to publish something that will be cited by others. For public sector jobs, Tim pointed out, one is not judged by the publication in which you publish but on the quality of writing.

How do you avoid writing a letter of application without sounding pretentious?

If you are stating factual elements about yourself, you will not sound pompous. Avoid subjective evaluations of yourself.

How do you use teaching evaluations in these applications?

Include selected evaluations, and send in the computer generated evaluation page that indicates how well the class went. You can also include strong comments from particular students. Peer and faculty evaluations should be included as well; make sure to invite your mentor to your classes so that s/he can observe you teaching.

If you have personal connections to your work, do you stress those in your letter or not?

The decision should be based on the nature of the position for which you are applying.

Presenting Yourself on the Academic Job Market

American Folklore Society
*Professional Development Session for
 Students and New Professionals*
 Atlanta, Georgia October 19-22, 2005

Prepared by Marcia Gaudet
 University of Louisiana at Lafayette

Getting a Head Start:

- Start preparing early in graduate program (e.g., consider possible secondary areas).
- Become active in the profession—attend AFS and other relevant conferences; present papers, if possible.
- Begin recording information for your cv.
- Get teaching experience before you go on the job market.
- Begin collecting materials for your teaching portfolio
- Earn the respect of your mentors as a genuine professional. They will be writing letters of recommendation for you.
- Become familiar with important organizations and websites, such as:
 American Folklore Society
<http://www.afsnet.org>
 American Folklife Center, Library of Congress
<http://www.loc.gov/folklife>
 Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage
<http://www.folklife.si.edu/index.html>
 Modern Language Association
<http://www.mla.org>
 American Anthropological Association
<http://www.aaanet.org>

Curriculum Vitae GUIDELINES

General Guidelines:

- Length: 2 or 3 pages
- Format: Must be consistent—and visually pleasing
- Divisions and subdivisions: Divide into appropriate divisions or categories; list items in reverse chronological order.

Divisions or Categories: These are somewhat standard categories, but other titles are sometimes used. This is not the *only* acceptable listing of categories. For example, if you apply for a position that stresses teaching, you should put the *Teaching* section before *Publications*.

- *General information:* Name, address, and phone numbers (only those set up to receive messages), e-mail address, FAX number, if available.
- *Education:* University and college degrees, name of institutions and dates—or anticipated date.
- *Dissertation:* Title; name of chair; brief summary (short paragraph—2 to 4 sentences)
- *Professional experience:* Teaching experience—courses you have taught, listed by name of course and level of course; other professional experience: writing center, tutoring, grading, research assistant work, administrative work, etc.
- *Publications:* List all publications by categories: articles, book chapters, review essays, contributions to reference books, book reviews. Use a separate sub-heading for work currently under consideration. Use the standard citation form in your field.
- *Presentations:* List each paper by title, name of conference, with place and dates. List professional conference presentations and community service presentations separately.
- *Teaching and research interests:* List your primary and secondary areas. Indicate that teaching portfolio is available.
- *Honors and awards:* List any departmental, college, or university level awards, grants, or fellowships. Include dates.
- *Service (academic and professional):* List committee assignments, leadership roles in student or professional organizations, conference planning.
- *Languages (Optional):* List foreign languages and indicate proficiency level—e.g., fluent, proficient, reading knowledge, etc.
- *Professional memberships:* List memberships in national and regional professional organizations.
- *References:* List names, titles, phone numbers, and e-mail addresses of those who have agreed to write letters of recommendation for you. Indicate that your dossier is available upon request.

Letter of Application GUIDELINES

General Guidelines:

- Use good bond paper with letterhead
- Length should be 1 ½ to 2 pages
- Write letter to the specific job at a specific institution

Parts of Letter:

- *Salutation:*
Address the letter--by *title and name*—to the person listed in the job announcement (i.e., head of the search committee, dept. head, etc. Verify the address details (e.g., name of dept., etc.) and check spelling of all names.
- *Introductory paragraph:*
Specify the particular job for which you are applying.
Mention the source of the job announcement (e.g., MLA Job Information List)
Identify yourself and your professional status (Ph.D., A.B.D, w/completion date).
- *Dissertation paragraph:*
Provide title of dissertation, along with name of director.
Give a brief synopsis of your project—as compelling and accessible as possible.
- *Teaching paragraph:*
If the job emphasizes teaching over research, this paragraph should be longer and more significant than the research one. Include some discussion of your “philosophy of teaching.”
Describe your teaching experience and expertise, as well as related experiences, e.g., tutoring, writing center work, research assistantships, etc.
Mention any awards for teaching or recognized innovations in teaching.
- *Research paragraph:*
If the job emphasizes research over teaching, this should come *before* teaching paragraph.
List any awards won in support of your research and/or dissertation.
List any submissions under consideration or accepted for publication. Discuss current or planned research projects—not covered under dissertation paragraph.
- *Miscellaneous information paragraph:*
Any additional information—particularly things not mentioned elsewhere: leadership roles, conference planning, advising, committee work
- *Concluding paragraph:*
Identify any attachments (c.v. and other items requested with application letter)
Let them know that your dossier is available.
Let them know if you’ll be at MLA, AFS, AAA, etc., for interviews, and how to contact you.

TEACHING PORTFOLIO Guidelines

General Guidelines:

- Keep a copy of *all* materials from the classes you teach (syllabi, assignments, exams, writing assignments, etc.).

- Commit to writing your “Philosophy of Teaching.”
- Invite your teaching mentor and/or dissertation director to observe your teaching.
- Keep a copy of Student Evaluations of Instruction.
- Keep information about any Teaching Awards you have received.

Organizing a Teaching Portfolio:

Important things to decide--

- Materials to include
- Philosophy of Teaching
- Student Evaluations
- Organization and Presentation

“The Teaching Portfolio” (from *Teaching Tips: Strategies, Research, and Theory for College and University Teachers*, Robert Menges, et. al., D. C. Heath and Company, 1994):

The “Teaching Portfolio” is an increasingly popular method of evaluating teaching both for personnel decisions and for teaching improvement. Essentially your portfolio can include any material you feel might help document your teaching effectiveness. Thus your portfolio might include summaries of student ratings of teaching, syllabi, samples of student papers, exams, or other indicators of learning, reports of peer visitation to classes, a self-evaluation, a journal of reflections on your experiences in teaching, descriptions of things you have done to develop new teaching methods or course materials, examples of research on teaching, and/or plans or goals for the future. (336)

For a detailed description of the teaching portfolio (or dossier), see:

- Edgerton, R., et. al. *The Teaching Portfolio: Capturing the Scholarship in Teaching*. Washington, D.C.: American Association for Higher Education, 1991.
- Seldin, P. *The Teaching Portfolio*. Bolton, MA: Anker, 1991.
- Shore, B. M., et.al. *The Teaching Dossier: A Guide to Its Preparation and Use*. Montreal: Canadian Association of University Teachers, 1986.

PRESENTING YOURSELF IN THE PUBLIC FOLKLORE JOB MARKET

Prepared by Tim Evans, Western Kentucky University

General tips on looking for a job:

As a folklorist, a general knowledge of both the academic and the applied aspects of the field is essential, no matter what your long term career goals are. Many folklorists do both.

If possible, complete an internship while in school or just after finishing your degree.

Think about the skills needed in public folklore, and do your best to acquire them. They include demonstrable fieldwork skills, photography, sound recording, presentation skills, public speaking, the ability to write for general audiences, grant writing, museum skills, archival skills, organizational skills, computer skills, the ability to keep financial records, and many others. Above all, public folklorists need a good general background in the study of folklore, and the ability to collaborate with both those whose culture we present, and professional colleagues from a variety of fields.

Subscribe to the Publore listserv (<http://list.unm.edu/cgi-bin/wa?SUBED1=publore&A=1>). This is the best place for public folklore job announcements. If you are looking for a specific type of job - e.g., with a museum - check out the relevant publications (e.g., *History News*, *Museum News*), or subscribe to the relevant listservs.

Join the Public Programs section of AFS.

Read the AFS Public Programs Bulletin. It is online at <http://afsnet.org/sections/public/ppbulletin.cfm>. It will give you a good overview of the field.

Survey the web sites of public folklore programs. A great many of them can be accessed through <http://afsnet.org/tapnet>.

If possible, attend conferences and introduce yourself to people. This can include local and regional meetings. Have business cards made and give them out to people. Figure out who people are in the public folklore world - at AFS, attend public folklore sessions, the Public Programs section meeting, or the Folklore and Education section meeting. When networking at a conference, be sure to dress and behave in a professional manner.

If you are looking for a job in a particular location, area of expertise or type of institution, find out what the relevant institutions are or who the relevant people are, visit them, and introduce yourself.

If possible, volunteer to do public folklore work (e.g., work at festivals or in museums), and/or take temporary contract jobs.

Owning a car, and being willing/able to relocate for a job, definitely help. It is a common pattern for public folklorists (and academics) to take several short-term contract jobs in different locations before they get a permanent job.

Sending out unsolicited resumes or posting your resume online doesn't hurt, but it's unlikely to get you a job.

Applying for jobs:

Research organizations to which you are applying - check their web pages, ask other folklorists about them and see whether they have sent any recent reports to the AFS Public Programs Bulletin.

Contact the organization by email or phone, to let them know that you are applying. Act upbeat and friendly, but not arrogant or overly familiar.

Be sure that you have submitted all the necessary forms. For example, applicants for state or federal government positions often need to fill out extensive personnel forms.

Public folklore jobs can be housed in a variety of organizations: arts councils, historical societies, museums, universities, parks, libraries or archives, private nonprofits, humanities councils, historic preservation organizations, etc. Be sure you understand the type of organization you are applying to: this will affect how you present yourself.

Make it clear that you want a public folklore job - e.g., it isn't just temporary until you can get an academic job.

Letter of application:

Use good bond paper and a decent printer.

Length should be 1-2 pages. 1 page is probably better.

Direct the letter to the specific job and institution. Generic letters, and letters that seem uninformed about the job or institution, will not get very far.

Direct letters to the person listed in the job announcement. Be sure that titles or honorifics are correct (e.g., Dr. or Executive Director), and that names are spelled correctly. If no names are given in the announcement, try to find out to whom you should direct it. Otherwise, begin the letter Dear Sirs/Mesdames.

Begin the letter by specifying the job for which you are applying, and the source of the job announcement.

Next, identify yourself and your professional status, including degrees and job experience.

In the main body of your letter, identify relevant skills and experience. This can include previous jobs, internships or volunteer experiences, or relevant classes. Be sure to tailor your letter to the job, and emphasize skills that are relevant to the job - e.g., fieldwork, museum work, grant writing, festival work, organizational skills, experience in the relevant geographic area or specific field (e.g., folk art, or Jewish culture).

Find out as much as you can about the culture and preferred jargon of the organization - you can often do this by looking at their website or publications - and use this in your letter. Different types of organizations - arts councils, museums, etc. - have different key words. Become as multilingual as you can.

Be sure to personalize your letter - i.e., show that you have the specific skills and experience they want.

If they ask for references (most do), be sure to mention people who will say nice things, know what you have been up to (you need to keep in touch with your references), and will be available if someone calls them (i.e., they aren't on sabbatical).

In your conclusion, identify any attachments (e.g., your VITA), provide contact information, and let them know that more information is available.

Edit for typos, and language that is vague, awkward or repetitive. Use spell check. Ask a friend (or your professor) to read it.

Resume:

One or two pages (I prefer two, printed back-to-back), unless otherwise specified.

Resumes don't need to be created with the latest high tech software (super-flashy resumes can sometimes be a liability), but readability is crucial. Readers should be able to easily find important information, and easily determine your skills and qualifications. Use bullets or the equivalent. Avoid dense-looking texts. Be consistent in your formatting.

Begin with your name, address, phone numbers, email addresses, and fax numbers, if available. Be sure that all information is relevant - e.g., if they call the phone number, they'll get you or be able to leave a message.

Standard categories include education, work experience, publications (films produced, exhibits curated, festivals organized, etc.), and references. Some resumes list specific skills, but that risks repeating information from the work experience section. Skills can also be emphasized in the letter.

Tailor the resume to the job, and keep it up to date. Emphasize skills and experience that are relevant. Sounding overly academic can sometimes be a killer, depending on who is reading it.

Emphasize relevant practical skills (e.g., photography, webpage design, grant writing), as well as your background in folklore. You may want to refer to specific course work, depending on how much job experience you have.

If you are fluent in languages other than English (especially Spanish), be sure to mention it.

Portfolios:

Update your portfolio regularly, and be as broad as possible. Include any material that you consider to be high quality work and which could ever be relevant to a job. This can include examples of fieldwork (e.g., interview transcripts, fieldwork-based articles), photography, documentation of performances (music, dance, craft work, etc.), writing samples or publications, grants, or any kind of public folklore products you've created: CDs, films, exhibit catalogs, festival brochures, websites, K-12 lesson plans, tour guides, etc.

When you go to a job interview, bring that portion of the portfolio that is relevant to the job. If it's not relevant, don't bring it.

Like resumes, portfolios need to look neat and be well organized. Information needs to be easy to find, whether you are presenting it at an interview or someone is looking at it when you are not present. A notebook with a cover and table of contents is a good idea. Materials in the portfolio need explanations - e.g., photo captions, or a brief explanation of why you created a lesson plan, and for whom.

Interviews:

Create a professional impression: arrive on time, dress appropriately. Keep in mind that appropriate dress may be slightly different in different professions (e.g., government officials or arts administrators may dress a little more formally or Aupscale@ than folklorists). Appropriate dress can also vary by region - people tend to dress more casually in Cheyenne than in Washington, D.C. Don't underdress (a nice dress or a coat and tie may be a good idea), but don't overdress either - it's rare to see a folklorist in a three-piece suit.

Be sure you are informed about the job and organization.

Arrive with questions you want to ask, but also listen respectfully.

You will be asked questions about yourself, but you may also be asked questions about the organization (AHow do you see yourself fitting in with us?@), or questions about how you would handle a hypothetical situation.

At some point, someone will ask, "Do you have any questions for us?"

Be self-confident, advertise yourself, don't belittle yourself, but don't come across as arrogant or pompous.