

Component for Module 330

Interpretive Training

PURPOSE

Ranger Careers interpreters will be involved in providing training for seasonal/ temporary workers and/or other park employees (seasonal rangers, entry and developmental level interpreters, volunteers, SCA's, interns, cooperating association employees, etc.). The full performance interpreter needs to develop knowledge and skills to plan, organize, present, and evaluate training for the interpretive development of others, to enhance their ability to provide interpretive opportunities for park visitors.

OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this component, the learner will be able to:

- identify training opportunities which meet the needs of park interpretive goals and objectives, and the developmental needs of coworkers;
- develop instructional objectives;
- choose and use appropriate training methods and techniques;
- devise and use evaluation tools;
- use Interpretive Curriculum concepts and principles as foundational elements of content and delivery for training sessions.

APPROACH

Application of skills learned in this component will result in interpretive training which contributes to the overall improvement of park interpretive and visitor services, and meets park management goals/needs. Training programs which the full performance interpreter may plan and deliver could include (but are not limited to): module components from the Interpretive Development Program curriculum; specific interpretive skill and technique development sessions; resource issue, multiple perspectives, or subject matter interpretation; refresher skills and concepts for returning seasonals.

The interpretive trainer is able to recognize and assess needs for training which will help meet the interpretive goals and objectives of park programs and planning documents, and the need for critical resource issue or subject matter interpretation. With supervisory oversight and approval, the interpreter works individually or as part of a team to plan, design, present, and evaluate the training session(s). All training efforts are grounded in the concepts and principles of the Interpretive Development Program Curriculum. Training evaluation forms are carefully constructed to solicit specific feedback on 1) the usefulness of the material presented; 2) the perceived effectiveness of the presentation methods/techniques used; and 3) the potential for the training to result in enhanced or increased interpretive opportunities for park visitors.

CONTENT OUTLINE:

I. Planning training

A. Target articulated needs

1. accomplish park interpretive goals
2. operations needs
3. implement park planning objectives
4. performance or outcome based
5. specific objectives targeting performance outcome
6. creative; designed to include optimum experiential variety (learning styles, media, techniques)
7. grounded in the principles and concepts of the Interpretive Development Program curriculum

B. The planning process

1. confer with park/division staff, supervisors, and/or managers to identify and articulate a perceived need for a particular training session based on:

- a. park planning documents
 - b. planning or training calendar requirements
 - c. interpretive programming goals/objectives
 - d. needs assessments
 - e. special needs such as critical resource issues or new/emerging resource information
 - f. developmental needs of employees
 - g. park operations needs
2. integrate with other training efforts and park programs to meet optimum needs
- a. best use of staff time
 - b. coordinated for best timing during work year
 - c. complements other training/program needs to accomplish park/division goals
3. scheduling
- a. dates and training location
 - b. coordination with other park events/needs
 - c. employee availability

4. instructional design

a. write outcome-based session goals/learning objectives
(see below)

b. solicit input and review from others

5. content selection and organization

a. identify and sequence content

b. identify resources

c. subject experts, other division staff, other agency representatives, etc.

d. relevant research materials

e. Interpretive Curriculum materials

f. other reference material

g. identify instructional methods

h. select media and props

i. write lesson plan (see below)

6. schedule other speakers/presenters

a. provide session agenda, goals/objectives

7. develop session evaluation forms (see below)

II. Effective training session design

A. Outcome-based goals for each training session target interpretive needs

B. Develop outcome-based, learner-centered instructional objectives**

1. objectives realistic, achievable, and measurable

2. successful accomplishment of objectives should contribute to successful outcome of session goals to meet specific interpretive needs
3. each objective should address:

a. the performance which will result

b. the conditions under which the performance will be accomplished

c. the criteria or level of accomplishment (quantity/quality descriptors) as applicable

C. Interpretive Curriculum as foundational language and reference for articulating goal and objective outcomes

D. Develop lesson plans**

1. identify

a. structure

b. sequence

c. time lines

d. teaching techniques

e. teaching aids

2. incorporate

a. assessment of audience and their needs

b. an understanding of the characteristics of adult learners**

c. instructional objectives

d. fully researched material

e. peer and supervisory review

f. demonstrate concepts of the Interpretive Curriculum

E. Training methods and techniques**

1. technique selection based on

a. instructional objectives

b. nature and content of material

c. experience and education of audience

d. time constraints

e. most effective methods for teaching the principles and concepts of the Interpretive Curriculum by example and illustration

2. types of classroom methods/techniques

a. participatory lecture

b. group discussion

c. demonstrations

d. buzz groups

e. brainstorming

- f. role playing
 - g. panels
 - h. group problem solving
 - i. critiques
 - j. case studies
 - k. experiential activities
 - l. field trips
 - m. questioning techniques
 - n. icebreakers
 - o. pre- and post-course assignments
3. media and training aid selection
- a. appropriate for the audience
 - b. provide accurate, effective, and vivid images that insure correct perception of what is presented to the audience
 - c. simplify complex materials
 - d. visually aid concepts presented
 - e. stimulate and sustain interest
4. types of classroom media/training aids
- a. chalkboards, white boards, flipcharts
 - b. handouts
 - c. instruments (checklists, quizzes, rating sheets, surveys, questionnaires, etc.)
 - d. overheads
 - e. computer aided graphics programs
 - f. slides
 - g. films/videos
 - h. audio cassettes
 - i. CD's
 - j. Internet

k. satellite link-ups

III. Presentation effectiveness

A. Learning environment**

1. assure mental and physical involvement by the participants

a. comfortable, informal classroom environment

b. minimal distractions

c. start and end on time

d. appropriate presentation style and humor

e. positive image

B. Instructing adult learners**

1. characteristics

a. need value and relevance of the session

b. bring past experiences, opinions, and ingrained habits

c. persuaded by opinions of many, not just one

d. prefer experiential techniques

e. respond to diversity of instruction methods

f. have basic preoccupation when entering the class

2. build an atmosphere of learning by following basic learning principles**

a. readiness (willingness)

b. primacy (right way first)

c. effect (satisfaction)

d. intensity (vividness)

e. exercise (repetition)

C. Learner-centered, teacher-directed training**

1. participant centered for performance as an outcome

2. objectives and outcomes are achievable

3. opportunity to practice the skills being taught as they are learning them

D. Teaching by example

1. most effective method - by example and illustration
2. modeling
 - a. connecting the audience (trainees) to the concepts and principles being taught
 - b. tangibles, intangibles, and universal concepts
 - c. multiple points of view
 - d. significance and meaning of park resources
 - e. appropriate techniques
 - f. cohesive development of a relevant idea or ideas, rather than relying on a recital of facts or chronology
 - g. appropriate depth and amount of relevant information
 - h. using park resources appropriately to create context and support content
 - i. an engaging presentation style appropriate to the audience and the context
 - j. creativity
 - k. appropriate logistics

IV Evaluation** and follow-up

A. Effective evaluation forms

1. reaction evaluation - immediate participant response
2. learning - concepts mastered measured at the end of the session
3. behavior - assesses on-the-job performance differences
4. results - on-the-job outcomes

B. Determine measurable indicators

1. tied to the session goals and objectives
2. tied to language and targeting standards of the Interpretive Development Program

C. Evaluation is only ONE indicator; not be used as the sole measure of training effectiveness; combine with:

1. other instructors/coordinator observations
2. peers who observed, but did not participate

3. self-assessment
 - a. materials presented
 - b. objectives covered
 - c. degree of participation
 - d. training techniques did/did not work well
 - e. media aids did/did not work well
 - f. types of questions asked
 - g. types of discussions generated
 - h. comments of participants during breaks
 - i. understanding the Interpretive Development Program language

D. Follow-up

1. all sources of evaluation for future reference, or course report
2. assess session goals and objectives and lesson plans/make notes
3. reinforce the principles/information taught locally in a coaching role
 - a. "practice what you preach"
 - b. provide additional resource material to interested individuals
 - c. provide constructive coaching feedback to employees
 - d. encourage the work of others by recognizing their attempts to use the principles/information taught in the training

**For more detail on these topics, see the *NPS Training Methods handbook, Fifth Edition*, National Park Service, 1991).

RESOURCES

Creative Training Techniques Handbook, Robert W. Pike, Lakewood Publications, 1989.

Interpretive Development Program Curriculum, Bundles 1-3, National Park Service, 1996-1998.

NPS Training Methods, Fifth Edition, National Park Service, 1991.

Preparing Instructional Objectives, Robert F. Mager, Pitman Learning, 1984.

SUGGESTED DEVELOPMENTAL ACTIVITIES

1. With supervisory approval, observe and/or request to apprentice to a park or regional training coordinator or training team in planning and designing a training course or session.
2. Acquire old session lesson plans from someone in your park or region who has experience as a training instructor. Review them for examples of training methods/techniques used, and types of media aids used. See if the session objectives are stated, and if they are clearly addressed in the lesson plan.
3. Collect blank copies of evaluation forms from the various training sessions you attend as references for creating your own.
4. Obtain a copy of a lesson plan from the Interpretive Skills Curriculum (4/92 version), and determine how you would alter it using the language and principles of the Interpretive Development Program Curriculum.
5. Start a file of creative ideas to use for training sessions including ice breakers, interesting graphics, appropriate quotations, etc.
6. Arrange an interview with your park or region's employee development specialist. Discuss how subject-specific interpretive training at the park or regional level can and should fit into the "big picture" of the NPS Employee Development Program.
7. With your supervisor's approval, do a written survey of your park/site's interpretive staff to assess their needs for interpretive development (using the competency standards and Interpretive Development Program Curriculum as a guide). How do these needs mesh with training needs expressed by the park/site's planning documents?

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Component for Module 330

Directing, Leading, and Coaching

PURPOSE

Many full performance level interpreters will be involved in providing day-to-day direction and coaching for seasonal/temporary workers and/or other park employees (seasonal rangers, entry and developmental level interpreters, volunteers, SCA's, interns, cooperating association employees, etc.). The interpreter needs to develop skills and abilities in directing, leading, and interpretive coaching to encourage the interpretive development of others, and enhance their ability to provide interpretive opportunities for park visitors.

OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this component, the learner will be able to:

- provide direction for others through basic task instruction, on-the-job training (OJT), and delegation;
- contribute to motivating others; - demonstrate the principles of "leading by example;"
- use two-way communication techniques in directing and coaching situations;
- provide effective input and feedback in informal verbal and written interpretive coaching situations;
- incorporate the concepts and principles of the Interpretive Curriculum in coaching situations.

APPROACH

Application of the skills learned in this component will provide front-line leadership ability which contributes to the overall effectiveness of park interpretive and visitor operations. The full performance interpreter is able to provide clear direction, positive and useful interpretive feedback, and skill development opportunities for others, while learning/developing in themselves the skills they will need in supervisory roles beyond the full performance level.

A variety of coaching and leadership situations exist in the field for full performance interpreters and other workers. In all of these relationships, the full performance interpreter's ability to coach and direct is essential to accomplishing interpretive and/or park operational goals, which directly link to the quality of visitor experiences. The full performance interpreter's ability to effectively communicate, and to serve as a role model and resource person, is critical to the development of the workers he/she leads and the projects she/he directs. The development of these essential skills cannot be left to chance.

The full performance interpreter's leadership skill development must also be well grounded in an understanding and application of the philosophy and principles of the Interpretive Development Program Curriculum and the NPS Essential Interpretive Competencies program. Interpretive success in personal and non-personal services is enhanced when coordinated with principles learned throughout the professional development program.

CONTENT OUTLINE:

I. Directing the work of others

A. Effectively directing people in their day-to-day park interpretive/visitor services

1. knowledge of park/division operations and goals
2. knowledge of park resources
3. knowledge of visitor needs and expectations
4. communication skills
5. knowledge of the tasks/work to be done
6. ability to establish short- and long-term goals, prioritization, and time management
7. knowledge of and skill in leadership
 - a. OJT, task instruction/direction, and delegation
 - b. motivation, praise, and incentives
 - c. ability to lead by example

B. On-the-job training (OJT) and task direction**

1. preparing the learner
 - a. put the learner at ease
 - b. explain the "why" of the whole job
 - c. find out what the learner already knows
 - d. define all jargon/vocabulary
2. defining the operation or task
 - a. review the steps of the operation
 - b. demonstrate
 - c. sample references
3. performance practice and experimentation time
4. follow-up
 - a. allow questions and provide help

- b. gradually decrease supervision, with periodic checking
- c. compliment after every successfully completed step
(see also, section III-D, "Two-way communication")

C. Delegating

- 1. elements of effective delegation
 - a. recognize skill levels and abilities of each worker or team member
 - b. assign work to the appropriate team member
 - c. gain agreement and commitment of the worker to perform the duties satisfactorily
 - d. grant appropriate authority to the worker to take the actions necessary to get the job done

D. Motivation, praise, and incentives**

- 1. individual differences
 - a. personal achievement
 - b. salary
 - c. advancement
 - d. responsibility
 - e. mission
- 2. communicate the "vision"
- 3. encourage input and "buy in" to vision
- 4. internal rewards
 - a. doing the job itself
 - b. using skills they enjoy
 - c. sense of satisfaction upon completion of a task or assignment
 - d. workers have contributed to vision
 - e. workers learn new things/skills as they work
- 5. external rewards
 - a. On-the-Spot and other types of immediate and official NPS awards
 - b. park-developed certificates, plaques, etc.
 - c. monetary or gift awards sponsored by cooperating associations or "Friends" groups

- d. formal recognition before a group of peers or the park staff
- 6. effective praising - good leaders make a consistent effort to "catch people doing something right"
 - a. offer praise with sincerity, and only when deserved
 - b. offer praise as soon as possible after the good work is done or observed
 - c. be specific about what actions pleased you
 - d. connect the actions which are being praised to the successful outcomes and goals of the division/park

** Information adapted from National Seminars Leadership Series, *The Supervisor's Handbook: Techniques for Getting Results Through Others* by Mark R. Truitt, National Press Publications, 1990.

II. Leading by example

A. Developing and communicating an interpretive "vision"

1. defining the contribution interpretation makes to park effort
2. supporting and encouraging the efforts of others
3. exhibiting ethical and responsible behavior
4. using the language and demonstrating the principles and concepts of the Interpretive Development Program in your everyday work
5. demonstrating the willingness to seek constructive feedback, and the ability to continue to improve the quality of interpretive programs/ products you produce
6. trying always "practice what you preach"
7. treating others with the level of respect and courtesy you would like to receive yourself
8. demonstrating effective, patient, and helpful methods of communication with the public
9. showing respect for points of view which differ from your own and/or the park's

III. Coaching other interpreters

A. Coaching attributes

1. sharing
2. providing feedback
3. providing information
4. providing suggestions

5. collaboration

B. Coaching relationship can be

1. voluntary

2. assigned

3. short-term

4. long-term

C. Coaching is not

1. supervision

2. confrontational, competitive, or adversarial

3. a formal mentoring program (although it may include peer-mentoring elements)

4. a way to promote/reinforce bad habits

5. a way to perpetuate inaccurate information

D. Two-way communication techniques for coaching

1. sender techniques

a. clear and concise

b. allow for the listener to seek clarification

c. reinforce difficult or complex ideas either by example or by additional phrasing

d. eliminate and overcome distractions in the environment (i.e., noise, visual distractions, personal habits)

e. use non-verbal and para-language effectively

f. know the topic

2. listening techniques

a. attention

b. avoid thinking about response before sender completes message

c. ask for clarification as needed

d. be non-judgmental until communication is complete

e. hold response (reply) until sender completes statement and indicates pause

E. Providing interpretive feedback

1. feedback based on solid interpretive foundation
 - a. concepts and principles of the Interpretive Development Program
 - b. the coach's own interpretive experience
2. verbal (informal) feedback in voluntary peer relationships
 - a. informally acknowledge/reinforce good/successful use of interpretive concepts and techniques when witnessed
 - b. volunteer informal suggestions for improvement of less than effective interpretive concepts/techniques when witnessed, the feedback is requested, and the situation is appropriate for you to comment; be confidential, specific and encouraging
3. written feedback in assigned coaching relationships
 - a. program audits/critiques
 - b. media product reviews
 - c. seasonal/SCA evaluations
- F. Tools for reviewing products or programs
 1. assessment checklist
 - a. knowledge of resource
 - b. knowledge of audience
 - c. themes, goals, objectives
 - d. appropriate media/materials used
 - e. desired outcome(s) evident
 - f. appropriate techniques used
 - g. connection to resource provided
 - h. relationship with audience established
 - i. clear, logical organization
 - j. audience reaction to product
 - k. tangible/intangible linkages established
- G. Outlines and graphs of tangible/intangible links
 1. study prior to observing

2. discuss afterward

H. Review of the program/product

1. maintain an open mind

2. use checklist

3. when attending a presentation, demonstrate appropriate behavior

a. be inconspicuous

b. take notes discreetly

c. stay for the whole program

d. listen to audience response

e. acknowledge interpreter at conclusion of presentation

I. The coaching session

1. meeting to talk about program/project

a. timeliness/immediacy is essential

b. create a relaxed, supportive atmosphere

c. select appropriate location

d. establish rapport

e. use appropriate non-verbal cues

f. sensitive to difficulty of receiving feedback

g. maintain eye contact

h. begin each session differently

i. cite concise, specific examples

j. use "positive assessment" strategy

k. make specific suggestions for improvement and/or integrating new techniques

l. give praise to those who show improvement

m. help individual move to higher level of excellence

-tangible/intangible connections

-multiple points of view

- n. listen carefully and respond to comments
 - o. use questions effectively
 - p. encourage interpreter to make suggestions for his/her own improvement
 - q. share overheard visitor comments
2. working to minimize conflict during session
 - a. adapt the session to the interpreter's learning and communication styles
 - b. use "positive assessment"
 - c. direct comments toward future improvement
 - d. allow room for creativity
 - e. maintain sight of purpose
 - f. end the session if positive energy/comments are lost
 3. conclude session
 - a. summarize main points
 - b. allow interpreter to make final comments
 - c. provide written comments which don't introduce any new ideas
- J. Serving as a "resource person"
1. suggest/provide learning and training resources
 2. suggest/provide developmental assignments
 3. provide tools, audit forms, and information for others to develop self-assessment skills
 4. share your learning experiences with others
- K. Interpretive results from effective coaching
1. contribute to interpreter's skill development
 2. improve quality of coach's feedback
 3. enhance park/site's program/product quality
 4. increase number/quality of potential interpretive opportunities for visitors
 5. enhance resource stewardship opportunities

RESOURCES

The Art of Interpretive Critiquing, Bill Lewis, book/video tape.

[Communications](#), John Tyler, Andy Kardos, Linda Olson, Kent Taylor, Bill Fuchs, NPS Interpretive Skills I lesson plan, 1992.

Feedback... Or the Battle of the Coach, Nancy Hadlock-Ferrell, and Tom Ryan, 1991. NAI Workshop Proceedings pgs. 134-36.

How to Audit Interpretive Programs, Doug Thompson, Colonial National Historic Park handout, NPS.

The Interpreter's Guidebook: Techniques for Programs and Presentations, Kathleen Regnier, Michael Gross and Ron Zimmerman, UW-SP Foundation Press, Inc., Stevens Point, WI, 1992. pgs. 91-94.

Interracial Communication, Andrea Rich, Harper and Row, 1974.

Leadership Dilemmas - Grid Solutions, Robert R. Blake, and Anne Adams McCause, Gulf Publishing, Austin, TX, 1991. pgs. 260-65.

Listen and Be Listened To, George Bell, American Management Association, 1981 (workbook and audio tapes).

Naturalist Training: What the Beginning Naturalist Needs to Know, handout, Ron Zimmerman, 1988.

[Preparing and Presenting the Talk](#), D. Murphy, Smitty Parratt, K. Cook, NPS Interpretive Skills lesson plan (Preparing, practicing, and doing your own). 1992.

[Program and Performance Evaluation](#), M. Whatley and M. Gillett, NPS Interpretive Skills I lesson plan, 1992.

Reaching Out: Interpersonal Effectiveness and Self-Actualization, David Johnson, Prentice-Hall, 1972.

The Supervisor's Handbook: Techniques for Getting Results Through Others, National Seminars Leadership Series, by Mark R. Truitt, National Press Publications, 1990.

[Themes and Objectives](#), D. Whitman, S. Thede, D. Dahlen, NPS Interpretive Skills lesson plan, 1992.

[Questioning Techniques](#), SWR, PNW, C. Cucurullo, NPS Interpretive Skills lesson plan, 1992.

Critique Form Examples - NPS handouts

SUGGESTED DEVELOPMENTAL ASSIGNMENTS

1. Review your park's awards and incentives policy.
2. Take a locally offered seminar or correspondence course in introductory supervisory or leadership techniques and/or interpersonal communication skills.
3. Interview coworkers about their recollections of good and bad on-the-job-training situations they experienced in previous jobs.
4. Think of a work-related task or duty for which you have been required to give instruction to others (i.e., something relating to visitor center operations, sales outlet operations, reporting procedures, computer procedures, audio-visual equipment operations, resource/visitor protection procedures, etc.). Using the OJT and Task Direction model in the curriculum outline above, determine how you could give the instruction more clearly and effectively. Practice giving the new instruction to a coworker who has not done the task before, and get his/her feedback on the clarity and usefulness of your direction.
5. Watch a coworker's program, making a list of the techniques, skills, and ideas that you might use, modify, and/or adapt to your interpretive programs.
6. Sit in on the audit of a coworker being done by his/her supervisor (with permission). Discuss the coaching technique with the supervisor afterwards.
7. Watch the program of a coworker and graph it based on tangible/intangible connections. Create this graph with the coworker or discuss it after the program.
8. Watch a videotaped program with a coworker or supervisor. Prepare an oral and written review. Have the coworker or supervisor role-play the presenter and provide feedback about the program. Following the role-play, discuss the review.
9. Read the notebook and watch the Bill Lewis tape "The Art of Interpretive Critiquing." Create a form or process which incorporates the principles/techniques included in the video and in the outline for this component.
10. Following a feedback session, evaluate the benefits of the reviewing process for yourself. What resource knowledge did you gain? What ideas did you obtain about concepts or techniques? How could you expand the product to incorporate multiple points of view?
11. Role-play informal feedback situations with one or more of your coworkers using typical interpretive scenarios in your park. Practice sharing feedback ideas informally, and then critique each other's handling of the situation.
12. Review a written interpretive product. Provide the author with written suggestions and an oral review. When completed, assess the effectiveness of the interaction and the reactions of the author. Discuss this interaction with your supervisor.

13. Practice obtaining feedback from audiences. Listen to visitor comments during your review of a program. Ask visitors questions about the program theme/objectives following the program. Ask them about the strengths and weaknesses of the program. Provide this feedback to the presenter for discussion.

14. Coach a coworker in learning how to be a coach.

15. Coach a VIP, seasonal, concession employee, association employee, or other NPS employee who performs interpretive duties through the work season. Review different interpretive products over time to illustrate progress, and facilitate an ongoing process for increasing interpretive effectiveness.

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