

Entry Level Park Ranger Interpreter

MODULE 101

Title: Fulfilling the NPS Mission: The Process of Interpretation

Context

This is the cornerstone module of the Interpretive Development Program -- it establishes the foundation for ALL that follows in an interpreter's professional development. It is a natural evolution in thinking about the art and science of interpretation, which combines the essence of the past with the dynamism of the present to shape the future of our profession. Every decision an interpreter makes for any interpretive effort (talk, walk, tour, wayside, publication, etc.) must be based on the fundamental philosophies contained within this module. Moreover, a successful interpreter, or interpretive supervisor/manager will be able to articulate the value and effect of their interpretive choices to others through a sound grasp of the principles contained within this module. Each essential competency for interpreters reflects elements of Module 101, therefore, it is strongly recommended that the study of any module/component of the curriculum include connections to Module 101.

Description

This block of instruction introduces all interpretive and non- interpretive park employees to fundamental interpretive purpose and process -- why we do interpretation, what interpretation is, and how interpretation works to fulfill the NPS mission and facilitate stewardship. It also provides the foundation for interpreters to successfully demonstrate interpretive competency requirements throughout their professional development.

Competency Curriculum

The following curriculum components outline the developmental learning elements that compose the skills set for this competency. From these outlines, 1) employees and their supervisors can determine learning needs and strategies, 2) instructors can develop sessions and lesson plans. Each component also contains a list of useful references and developmental activities.

- Why We Do Interpretation: Meeting the NPS Mission
- What Interpretation Is: Tangibles, Intangibles, and Universal
- How Interpretation Works: The Interpretive Equation

Objectives At the end of this module, learners will be able to:

- Describe ways in which meanings may be revealed by creating linkages through tangible and intangible resources;
- Explain the interpreter's role to facilitate the visitors' experience and relationship to the resource, and how this relationship provides an opportunity for stewardship;
- Describe how interpretation meets the National Park Service and site mission/ objectives;

- Describe how the "interpretive equation" affects the success of interpretive efforts;
- Establish a personal foundation to develop interpretive effectiveness through understanding interpretive purpose and techniques

Audience

All park rangers and other NPS staff with public contact responsibility, both permanent term and seasonal, as well as cooperating association employees, volunteers, concession employees, and park partner employees.

Topics

Interpretive purpose, mission, and who you speak for/represent; tangible/intangible linkages and universal concepts; characteristics of an effective interpreter; the interpretive equation; the visitor "Bill of Rights;" 3-Ms of interpretation, stewardship through interpretation.

Delivery

Park and cluster-level seasonal or group training; mentoring, independent study, part of servicewide training offering; university sources; can use video, classroom, satellite uplink.

Target

Within six months of appointment to interpretive duties.

<http://www.nps.gov/idp/interp/101/module.htm>

Component for Module 101

Why We Do Interpretation: Meeting the NPS Mission

PURPOSE This component establishes the foundation for *Module 101: Fulfilling the NPS Mission: The Process of Interpretation*, by defining the interpreter as integral to the development of the profession. It provides a set of ground rules to establish a personal interpretive philosophy and articulate ways in which interpretation contributes to resource protection and stewardship.

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

- begin to develop a personal philosophy of interpretation connected to the evolution of the craft;
- explain his/her personal obligation to establish a professional foundation for day-to-day decisions about interpretive methods and contributions to the NPS mission;
- establish a mission-driven approach to interpretation which incorporates both park management outcomes and audience revelation, both of which lead to enhanced stewardship of the resource.

APPROACH

Every interpreter must consider fundamental principles when selecting an interpretive strategy for a program, for a project, or when deciding how an interpretive effort can contribute to resource protection. Important choices are encountered throughout an interpreter's career, and must be effectively articulated to supervisors, managers, superintendents, and the public.

Previous approaches to training for new interpreters included a detailed introduction to significant names and dates, and references to important books. Often this introduction was coupled with an exercise in writing a personal definition of interpretation. This component, *Why We Do Interpretation*, incorporates many important aspects of the former approach with a strengthened sense of individual responsibility. Interpreters must search for understanding of the process of interpretation, its roots, its purpose in fostering resource stewardship, and the direction which they will take both as individuals and as professionals. Interpreters must be able to articulate the outcomes of interpretation so they can make personal choices in approach and establish the relevance of interpretation for managers making resource decisions. In this way the contributions of interpretation may be added to the other important functions in

resource protection. The interpreter needs a clear understanding that interpretation moves beyond a recitation of scientific data, or historical names and dates, or chronologies, or descriptions of how tall, deep, wide or big. Public recognition and support of their resource stewardship opportunities is the larger role of interpretation.

This journey in professional development lasts throughout a career. This component covers the present by laying a foundation for why we do interpretation and by identifying personal and professional obligations of the interpreter. Additional components in this module continue the study of the art by exploring essential elements of interpretation in specific detail. This component may be approached through mentoring, self-study, a detail assignment, or formal instruction.

CONTENT OUTLINE:

I. WHY WE DO INTERPRETATION

A. Quick overview of the agency's mission

1. Changes in socio/political climate between 1916 and present;
 - a. evolving concept of stewardship

B. How interpretation helps meet the National Park Service mission (the profession's mission)

1. Perpetuates and represents the heritage of the nation reflected in national park units;
2. Ensures the natural, cultural, and recreational heritage reflected in the national park units is available and accessible to everyone;
3. Provides experiences that strengthen the recognition, understanding, enjoyment, and preservation of the nation's heritage;
4. Creates the opportunity for audiences to ascribe meanings to resources, leading to concern for the protection of the resource. This revelation is the seed of resource stewardship. This is the goal of interpretation, not simply information or facts.

C. How the interpreter helps promote the National Park Service mission (the individual interpreter's mission)

1. Uses the "through interpretation, understanding; through understanding, appreciation; through appreciation preservation" process;
2. Meets management objectives through facilitating public participation in the stewardship of the resource
 - a. Uses established primary and secondary park themes to convey principle resource messages to public;
 - b. Helps the public understand its relationship and impact on resources;

- c. Encourages the public to develop personalized, proactive stewardship ethic;
- d. Empowers the public to influence policy to fulfill the National Park Service mission.

D. Personal and professional obligations of the successful interpreter

1. Accountability to the profession

- a. Clearly defines the distinctions between orientation/information, education, and interpretation and the role each plays in moving audiences toward stewardship outcomes (an information/interpretation continuum). All staff, volunteers, cooperating association employees, and concession employees help make or break a visitor's opportunity to move toward those stewardship outcomes;
- b. Develops a working knowledge in all methods and modes of delivery, communication, and props, not just in areas of personal preference;
- c. Continually improves resource knowledge base and skill levels to be competent in the broad range of interpretive environments;
- d. Chooses and uses the appropriate vehicle based on professional judgement, not personal preference;
- e. As a representative of the National Park Service, projects a professional appearance and manner at all times;
- f. Understands that the profession has evolved over time and that external/internal influences continue to affect that evolution.
- g. Understands the principles of professionalism and practice standards indicative of a profession.

2. Sensitivity

- a. Is sensitive to the fact that resources have multiple intangible meanings;
- b. Approaches audiences from multiple points of view;
- c. Acts as a facilitator and motivator;
- d. Makes interpretive connections that are broad based and accessible both intellectually and physically. Efforts are designed to touch a broad audience intellectually and/or emotionally, and crafted in a way to allow physical access.

3. Analytical / evaluative

- a. Constantly evaluates the effectiveness of programs, and audience needs and capability, and adjusts them as needed to maintain professionalism;
- b. Engages in ongoing, constructive self-evaluations.
- c. Incorporates influences of past leaders such as Tilden, Muir,

Mills, Lewis and others.

4. Teamwork

- a. Actively participates in park operations beyond the interpretive division;
- b. Takes responsibility for integrating the interpretive program into park operations;
- c. Actively solicits and uses the input of others (both NPS and non-NPS) in all aspects of the interpretive operation;
- d. Does not become territorial to the detriment of overall park operations.

RESOURCES

Adventures of a Nature Guide, Enos Mills, New Past Press, 1990.

Environmental Interpretation, Sam H. Ham, North American Press, 1992. Chapter One compares instruction to interpretation, and discusses audience discretion.

Interpretation in the National Park Service - A Historical Perspective, Barry Mackintosh, NPS publication, 1986. This document summarizes the development of the agency's interpretive efforts, its media approach, and threats to interpretation through the years.

Interpreting for Park Visitors, William Lewis, Acorn Press, 1989. This is a quick reference from one of the contemporary leaders in the field. Easy reading, yet thoughtful and well written.

Interpreting Our Heritage, Freeman Tilden, University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, 1957. Long considered the standard. Tilden's words have found resonance in this module of the curriculum.

Interpretive Skills Lesson Plans: "The Role of Interpretation in Park Operations" by Maria Gillett, 1992; "Advanced Interpretive Philosophy" by Jack Spinnler, 1982; "Evolution of the Interpretive Philosophy and Profession" by Tom Danton, 1988.

Interpretive Views: Opinions on Evaluating Interpretation in the National Park Service, Gary Machlis, ed., a collection of 24 essays by interpretive professionals on how to evaluate the effectiveness of the interpretive opportunity for visitors.

NPS Strategic Plan, 1996, Mission Statement, p. 5.

The Interpretive Journey, essay by Cynthia Kryston, 1996. Curriculum essay.

SUGGESTED DEVELOPMENTAL ACTIVITIES

1. Learner should read at a minimum the texts listed above by Tilden, Lewis, and Mackintosh, and read the curriculum preface essay by Kryston.
2. Learner should carefully research the authorizing legislation of her/his site, including the congressional reports and supporting documents for the legislation. Learner should also study the management plans for the site, including the primary and secondary themes, principle preservation issues, and the desired futures.
3. Learner must identify site's primary sources which support the development of interpretive ideas, and become thoroughly conversant with these sources before planning their programs. This is an ongoing process.
4. Each learner should write a personal contract for interpretation. This contract should be brief, and include commitment to subject matter, dedication to audience, perfection of skills, and personal desired outcomes of his/her interpretive efforts. This is not a definition of interpretation, but a statement of what he/she stands for and wants to accomplish through interpretation. (At its best, such a contract should start, "I believe. . .") This contract should explore the concepts of interpretation in the context of resource preservation and stewardship. Without a personal grounding in what they stand for or represent, and why they do interpretation, interpreters will be hard pressed to explain how their contributions to help meet the mission of the agency.
5. Learner may lead a discussion of interpretive views, outcomes, and the contribution of the "team" to meet the mission of the agency and/or specific site. This discussion can be conducted with other divisions, with partner organizations, or within interpretive division.
6. Learner may visit other sites to identify three interpreters whom he/she considers effective in creating meaning through use of tangible to intangible to universal linkages. Afterward, learner should write a summary of why those individuals were selected, and identify key interpretive attributes of these individuals. This list should be updated when appropriate. Learner is encouraged to establish a mentor relationship with at least one of these individuals to help develop professional abilities through discussions, comparative examples of their work.

Component for Module 101

What Interpretation Is - Tangibles, Intangibles, and Universal Concepts

PURPOSE This component describes the relationship between the resource and the audience and how interpretation, by presenting broadly relevant meaning, facilitates the connection of the two.

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

- describe the role of the resource, audience, and interpreter and their relationships to one another and preservation;
- list tangible resources, intangible resources, and universal concepts of their site;
- identify and make tangible/intangible linkages of lesser and broader relevance.

APPROACH

The tangible/intangible linkages and universal concepts (TIU) model should be viewed as a description of effective interpretation. It does **not** measure or provide a method for developing specific programs.

The TIU model addresses the "so what" of interpretation by describing the content of interpretive products: relevance and provocation, information, and technique. This model is not the only way to describe interpretation, but is suggested as a useful way to get at the "meanings" of the resource.

Effective use of the TIU model requires discipline and ongoing practice. Practice allows the learner to internalize the concepts and more easily identify interpretive opportunities. The learner should be exposed to a variety of real interpretive products and presentations and should identify the tangible/intangible linkages and possible universal concepts for each. The learner should also present several interpretive products exhibiting tangible/intangible linkages for peer review. Finally, the definitions of the words: tangible, intangible, and universal concepts should be viewed flexibly. Some intangibles that are not real things can be used in very tangible ways to help the audience access broader meanings. Likewise, it is open to debate whether some concepts are truly universal. The learner should not allow that debate to eclipse the fact that some concepts provide broad relevance to a very diverse audience. The actual categorization of a particular resource as tangible, intangible, or universal concept can provoke interesting discussion, but should not be allowed to sidetrack the model. Learners should ultimately be allowed to categorize specifics as they choose to.

CONTENT OUTLINE:

I. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RESOURCE, AUDIENCE, AND INTERPRETATION

A. Definitions and Roles

1. Resources possesses meanings and relevance.
 - a. purpose of resource is meanings - resources act as icons for meanings
 - b. individuals see different meanings in the same resource
2. Audience seeks the special--something of value for themselves.
 - a. entertainment and fun are part of it
 - b. audiences are on their own time
 - c. audiences are receptive to the special
3. Interpretation facilitates a connection between the interests of the visitor and the meanings of the park.
 - a. primary goal is not to provide information, but to provide access to meanings
 - b. interpretation must occur on the terms of the audience -- the audience is sovereign
 - c. providing accurate and balanced information about multiple perspectives is the responsibility of the interpreter - this is a tool that allows for respect and communication
 - d. the interpreter must be able to subjugate his or her own passions for and understandings of the resource in order to allow the audience to form theirs

B. Role of Interpretation in Preservation

1. Audiences must care about a resource before they value the preservation of the resource.
2. The primary goal of interpretation is not to preach preservation but to facilitate an attitude of care on the part of the audience.
3. Preservation depends on audiences' access to the meanings of the resource.

II. LINKING TANGIBLE RESOURCES TO INTANGIBLE RESOURCES AND MEANINGS

A. All parks have tangible resources like physical features, buildings, artifacts, etc.s

B. All parks have intangible resources like past events, people, systems, ideas, values, etc.

- C. All effective interpretation can be described as linking tangible resources to intangible resources in order to reveal meanings.
- D. Some intangible anecdotes, events, people, and easily understood concepts can be used in a tangible way.
- E. Tangible/Intangible linkages provide varying degrees of relevance for the audience.
- F. Tangible/Intangible linkage graph
 - 1. A tool: a graph represented by an x,y axis.
 - a. horizontal axis = "Tangible: information, narrative, chronology"
 - further represents the time the audience interacts with an interpretive product
 - b. vertical axis = "Intangible: meanings"
 - further represents relevance of the product to the audience
 - c. The relationship (links) of tangible to intangible or of information to meanings in an interpretive product can be conceptually plotted on this graph.
 - 2. Interpreters can use the graph to describe intended tangible/intangible linkages as well as identify information and interpretive techniques that support the effective delivery of an interpretive product.
 - 3. Audience reception of interpretive products can also be graphed.
 - a. differences between interpreter and audience graph should be expected
 - b. as long as audience accesses meanings and comes to care for the resource, the audiences linkages do not have to mirror the interpreter's intended relevant content
 - c. interpreters must realize interpretive intent, technique, and presentation remain a critical element of effective interpretation
 - 4. The graph is only one description of interpretation and should not be viewed as an inflexible structure.
 - 5. An alternative illustration: a wheel
 - a. hub = tangible
 - b. tire or rim = intangible
 - c. spokes = information and interpretive technique

III. UNIVERSAL CONCEPTS

- A. Universal concepts provide the greatest degree of relevance and meaning to the greatest number of people.

- B. Universal concepts are intangible resources that almost everyone can relate to. They might also be described as universal intangibles.
- C. Not all people will agree on the meaning of or share the same perspective towards a universal concept, but all people will relate to the concept in some significant way.
- D. Universal concepts make meanings accessible and the resource relevant to a widely diverse audience.
- E. The implications of and techniques for presenting universal concepts (universal concepts don't necessarily have to be explained to be experienced or understood) will differ from resource to resource. However, all interpretation seeks to place the visitor in relationship with broad meanings.
- F. Tangible/intangible/universal concepts can be captured and illustrated well by the theme of the interpretive product. The cohesive development of a relevant idea or ideas within an interpretive effort of any kind is enhanced by making links between tangibles, intangibles and universals.

Example: The rocks (tangible) of Yosemite tell many stories of beauty, danger, and mystery (intangible).

REFERENCES

Achieving Excellence in Interpretation: Compelling Stories Thinkbook, Rudd, Connie, 1995. A workbook designed to help interpreters discover the compelling stories and intangible and universal meanings associated with the resources.

An Interpretive Dialogue, Larsen, David, 1996.

The Interpretive Revolution, brochure, Mayo, Corky, 1996.

Generic Lesson Plan: "Connecting Tangibles, Intangibles, and Universal Concepts"
David Larsen, January 1997

Interpreting Our Heritage, Tilden, Freeman, University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, 1957. Long considered the standard. Tilden's words have found resonance in this module of the curriculum.

SUGGESTED DEVELOPMENTAL ACTIVITIES

Tangible/Intangible Linkages

1. Learner should compile a written list of the reasons why people do and should care about their sites. Then learner should identify an object or place, a tangible, that represents their site. Learner should make a list of six events, systems, values, ideas, universal concepts or other intangible resources that can be linked to their tangible. Do the links reveal meanings? Will those meanings help people care about the site as described on the first list? Learner should discuss this assignment with fellow interpreters and/or supervisor--do they see meaning in the linkages?

"An Interpretive Dialogue" and Freeman Tilden

2. Learner should read "An Interpretive Dialogue" and Freeman Tilden's "Interpreting Our Heritage." Learner should write down thoughts that compare one or more of Tilden's six principles to the tangible/intangible model. Are they compatible? What might Freeman Tilden say to Harold Durfee Nedlit?

Tangible/Intangible Graph

3. Learner should graph a current interpretive product. Learner should identify linkages, the information that connects the linkages, as well as the interpretive techniques used to present the product.

4. Learner should create a new interpretive product using the graph model.

5. Learner should graph interpretive products created by other interpreters and then, if possible, compare their own graph with the observed interpreter's graph.

6. Learner should have other interpreters graph one of their own interpretive products and then compare their graph to the graph used to develop the product.

Universal Concepts

7. Learner should create a list of universal concepts and then study each item on the list and determine what it means in the context of human history and culture versus what it means in the context of Nature. What are the differences? What are the similarities? Will the conclusions allow for more fully integrated universal concepts in interpretive products?

Tangibles, Intangibles, Universal Concepts

8. Learner should make a list of tangibles, intangibles, and universal concepts

specific to their resource. Learner should choose items from each list and try to connect them to the other two lists? Do any ideas for interpretive products emerge?

9. Learner should keep the three lists handy as they research or physically explore their site. When the learner is provoked or finds personal relevance or meaning in the resource, the learner should identify the tangible, intangible, and universal concepts involved in their own provocation. Do any ideas for interpretive products emerge?

Component for Module 101

How Interpretation Works: The Interpretive Equation

PURPOSE This component introduces the interpreter to the five basic elements of the interpretive process through the use of a formula known as the "interpretive equation."

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

- list the five basic elements of the interpretive equation and describe what they mean;
- explain how the various elements of the equation relate to one another;
- demonstrate how the elements of the equation relate to all interpretive planning, activities, programs and projects;
- apply the equation concepts to all subsequent interpretive activities.

APPROACH

The interpretive equation is a quick shorthand method that helps the learner remember basic concepts that relate to all interpretive activities. Whichever approach is used to present information, it is imperative that the learner thoroughly understands the five elements of the interpretive process and how they relate to actual interpretive work.

Because this component is meant to give interpreters a grounding in concepts that they will use throughout their career, it is recommended that many actual park examples illustrating the concepts be provided as part of the learning experience. This will enable the learner to gain experience in applying these somewhat abstract concepts to real-world situations and concerns.

CONTENT OUTLINE:

I. THE INTERPRETIVE EQUATION

A. **(KR + KA) x AT = IO**

(Knowledge of the Resource + Knowledge of the Audience) x Appropriate Techniques = Interpretive Opportunities

1. The interpretive equation applies to all interpretive activities
2. It is important to keep the equation elements in balance

B. "Grading" or assessing the desired **OUTCOMES** of the equation

1. The interpreter must regularly evaluate whether interpretive activities are providing effective interpretive opportunities (small "o" outcomes), and whether these opportunities result in the ultimate desired outcome of a stronger stewardship ethic in the audience (large "O" Outcomes).

II. THE FIVE ELEMENTS OF THE INTERPRETIVE EQUATION

A. KNOWLEDGE OF THE RESOURCE (KR)

1. Knowledge is more than just the **facts** about the resource. Interpreters must identify and be fully aware of the many different **intangible and universal meanings** the resources represent to various audiences.
2. Interpreters must possess a very broad knowledge of the history of the park beyond just the enabling legislation. They must be knowledgeable about past and contemporary issues, and the condition of the park and its resources.
3. Interpreters should not use their knowledge of the resources and the intangible/universal meanings associated with them to offer only bland recitals of non-controversial "safe" facts. Interpretation embraces a discussion of human values, conflicts, ideas, tragedies, achievements, ambiguities, and triumphs.
4. Interpreters must accommodate and present multiple points of view in their interpretation and not presume to expound what they think is the only "official" or "true" version of the resources and their meaning.
5. Interpreters must be careful to rely on accurate information when

developing interpretive material and avoid the tendency to exaggerate or slant information to present a personal or particular viewpoint.

6. Interpreters should use their knowledge to convey the park's approved resource-related themes.

B. KNOWLEDGE OF THE AUDIENCE (KA)

1. **IMPORTANT!** The definition of audience includes more than just those individuals who actually visit a park. We have a professional responsibility to reach out and provide interpretive opportunities for those who will never visit a park, as well as to actual park visitors. There are many ways to be a visitor to a national park. One can visit a park in person, electronically via computer, through a program in a classroom, or by reading a book about the park.
2. There is no such thing as the average visitor.
3. Not every visitor requires an "intensive" interpretive experience.
4. Interpreters must recognize and respect the specific personal values and interests visitors associate with resources.
5. Interpreters should keep in mind the "visitors' bill of rights." Whether visiting a park on-site or off, visitors have a right to:
 - a) have their privacy and independence respected;
 - b) retain and express their own values;
 - c) be treated with courtesy and consideration;
 - d) receive accurate and balanced information.
6. Interpreters should recognize the "visitor continuum." The ultimate goal of interpretation is to provide opportunities for visitors to forge compelling linkages with the resources that they develop an active stewardship ethic. Visitors generally fall into a continuum in one of the following five categories, any of which may lead to increasing awareness of the relationships between tangible resources and their intangible and universal values:
 - a) recreation/"trophy hunting;"
 - b) nostalgia/refuge/isolation;
 - c) information/knowledge;
 - d) connections/linkages;
 - e) stewardship/patrons.

The interpreter's job is to ensure that visitors have a positive experience at any of these levels, and to try to help visitors reach a deeper and richer level of understanding if possible. No matter where the visitors are on the continuum, the interpreter should strive to give them something of value to take home.

C. KNOWLEDGE OF APPROPRIATE TECHNIQUES (AT)

1. There are many interpretive techniques, none of which is inherently better than any other. Determination of the appropriate technique results from analysis of the resource themes and audience profile. The interpreter should never choose a technique without first identifying the theme, goals, and objectives and the prospective audience to determine if it is an appropriate "fit." Choosing techniques willy-nilly or because the interpreter personally enjoys them may mean that programs are only reaching a small portion of the audience.
2. Whichever technique is chosen, whether personal or non-personal, on-site or off-site, interpreters should ensure that it addresses the tangible/intangible/universal linkages of the resource.
3. Interpreters must stay current on communications and delivery techniques and new media possibilities, and use them as appropriate. However, beware of adopting new techniques simply because they are new. See #1 above.
4. Interpreters must regularly evaluate the effectiveness of the techniques used, and replace and update them when they no longer achieve the desired outcomes.

D. THE INTERPRETIVE OPPORTUNITY (IO)

1. To provide interpretive opportunities to the widest possible array of audiences, the interpreter must be proficient in as many techniques as possible, and should ensure that the overall park interpretive program offers the interpretive themes through as many different techniques as are appropriate.
2. The effect of the interpretive opportunity may not be immediately apparent to either the interpreter or the visitor. Interpretation may have both a long-term and/or a short-term effect. Interpreters should not always expect to see an immediate reaction in the visitor.

INTERPRETATION IS A SEED, NOT A TREE.

E. THE INTERPRETIVE OUTCOME

1. Outcome evaluation must be **visitor-based**.
2. Evaluations should examine both short-term and long-term outcomes. Evaluations of short-term outcomes focus on whether an effective interpretive opportunity was offered to the audience (i.e., was the information correct, was an appropriate technique used). Evaluations of long-term outcomes focus on whether the larger NPS mission goals of perpetuating the nation's natural and cultural heritage and promoting a stewardship ethic in the public are met. (See Module 101 component "Why we do Interpretation, section I.)
3. Although outcome cannot always be measured immediately or quantitatively, the interpreter still has a professional responsibility to measure the effectiveness of the various interpretive opportunities being offered to the public to see if they are successful or need revising or updating.
4. Interpreters must seek feedback from the audience to gauge the effectiveness of the interpretive theme, content, program, etc. The degree to which the audience forms effective linkages to the resources, not the amount of information conveyed, audience applause, or the personal satisfaction of the interpreter, is the measure of an effective outcome.
5. Evaluation of interpretive outcomes can occur through a variety of mechanisms such as focus groups, visitor "report cards," and visitor surveys.

III. A FINAL THOUGHT

Although not specifically included in the interpretive equation, the interpreter's attitude is a vital element in ensuring that the equation works properly. The interpreter must care about both the resource and facilitating interpretive opportunities and outcomes if he or she wishes to inspire caring in others. In short, those who appreciate resources protect them.

RESOURCES

Park legislative histories, records of Congressional hearings related to the park, records of public meetings, newspaper articles, local governmental, press, and community group archives. Current and historical park correspondence files. (These sources can provide good insights into how the public, particularly the local community, views the park and the types of values and meanings they associate with the resources.)

BOOKS

Achieving Excellence in Interpretation: An Introduction to Compelling Stories, (National Park Service, 1995). A workbook designed to help interpreters discover the compelling stories and intangible and universal meanings associated with the resources.

Interpreting Our Heritage, Freeman Tilden (University of North Carolina Press, 1957). Excellent discussion of the concepts represented by the interpretive equation.

Interpretive Skills Lesson Plans: "The Role of Interpretation in Park Operations" by Maria Gillett, 1992; "The Park-Visitor-Interpreter" by SER, 1983; "Identifying and Understanding the Visitor" by Linda Olson, 1983.

Interpretive Views: Opinions on Evaluating Interpretation in the National Park Service, Gary E. Machlis, ed. (National Parks & Conservation Association, 1986). Collection of 24 essays by interpretive professionals on how to evaluate the effectiveness of the interpretive opportunity for visitors.

Islands of Hope, William Brown (National Recreation & Park Association, 1971).

On Interpretation: Sociology for Interpreters of Natural and Cultural History, Gary E. Machlis & Donald R. Field, eds. (Oregon State University Press, 1992). Twenty essays discussing the wide variety of visitor needs and reactions to interpretation.

Personal Training Program for Interpreters, vintage 1976 NPS training package, available for loan from Mather Training Center.

Sacred Ground: Americans and Their Battlefields, Edward Linenthal (University of Illinois, 1991). An intriguing look at some of the intangible meanings (religious, political, social, and personal) associated with American military sites. Includes chapters on Lexington, Concord, Gettysburg, Little Bighorn, and USS Arizona.

Sand County Almanac, Aldo Leopold (Oxford University Press, 1949). Includes a wonderfully personal account of how the author moved through a similar "visitor continuum," coming to recognize wildlife as more than a hunter's prey.

The Fifth Essence, Freeman Tilden (National Park Trust Fund Board, 1950). Short narrative exploring the intangible essence which makes parks unique.

The Past is a Foreign Country, David Lowenthal (Cambridge University Press, 1985). Excellent scholarly examination of what cultural resources represent to people and why. Full of examples from around the world. Particularly strong on exploring why people adopt a nostalgic view of history.

VIDEOTAPES

Focus Groups: A Tool for Evaluating Interpretive Services, Nancy Medlin & Gary Machlis (Cooperative Park Studies Unit, University of Idaho, 1991). A videotape and manual, a practical step-by-step guide to evaluating interpretive services using the focus group technique.

Self-Critique: A Tool for Evaluating Interpretive Services, Nancy Medlin, Gary Machlis, & Jean McKendry (Cooperative Park Studies Unit, University of Idaho, 1993). A training video and manual on how an interpreter can assess the effectiveness of interpretive programs.

SUGGESTED DEVELOPMENTAL ACTIVITIES

1. Prepare a list of ten things you will try to do in the next two months to enrich the interpretation at the park and enhance your skills as an interpreter. Meet with your supervisor at the end of the two months to review the progress of your efforts and to prepare a new list for the next six months. Projects should not be part of assigned work duties, but small extra things which will help you to try out and evaluate ideas and concepts presented in the component.
2. Attend a Compelling Stories workshop or complete the Compelling Stories workbook.
3. Prepare material for the park's home page on the Internet which goes beyond information and explores the resource's intangible meanings for off-site visitors.
4. Begin a "life list" of interpretive techniques, observing others and recording what you think are the advantages and disadvantages of each.
5. Write your own personal contract for interpretation, describing your personal philosophy of interpretation and how you will strive to help others forge personal connections with the resources you interpret. If you have done this in the past, revisit your contract and consider its intent with this component in mind.

6. Actively participate in a Visitor Services Project or a visitors' focus group.
7. Review your park's entire interpretive program and try to determine at which level of the visitor continuum the programs and projects are aimed. Help the programs and projects if you find they are all aimed at one audience or if they are all aiming at levels below the "connections/linkages" step.
8. Review your park's interpretive programs and projects to see if they reveal, either directly or indirectly, some of the intangible and universal meanings associated with the resources. Help to enhance programs or projects which are weak.