

## **Component for Module 103**

# **Talk Organization**

### **PURPOSE**

This component contains key elements of interpretive talk organization and sequencing, as well as audience characteristics. The interpreter must consider organization in preparing his/her program to provide a cohesive development of relevant ideas and to maximize interpretive opportunity.

### **OBJECTIVES**

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

- produce a written outline or organizational tool with citations for an interpretive talk;
- describe two characteristics of typical audiences that would attend programs at the park;
- demonstrate the ability to prepare an interpretive talk that includes an introduction, body, transitions, and conclusion which develop a cohesive set of relevant ideas or concepts;
- describe two or more types of outlines or organizational tools.

### **APPROACH**

With the guidance of goals, themes, and objectives, strong organization is the next vital element that allows an interpreter to mold original research into an interpretive talk that develops ideas in a cohesive, relevant manner.

Different people tend to organize their thoughts and materials in different ways. Likewise, various audience types process information in different ways. There is no single correct way to organize a subject into an interpretive program. Most organizational techniques include certain elements. Through organization the interpreter creates a meaningful introduction, develops strong points to support the thesis, blends those points smoothly in a cohesive development of ideas, connects tangible objects or facts to universal concepts, and summarizes them in a powerful conclusion supporting the park's compelling story.

Interpretive talks are attended by a wide variety of visitors. The specific makeup of the audience will influence the organization and presentation of any interpretive activity. To the extent possible, interpreters must prepare themselves for the types of audiences that may attend.

Successful completion of this component can be accomplished in two to four hours, if delivered in the classroom.

### **CONTENT OUTLINE:**

#### I. Preparing for audience

- A. Subject matter experts
- B. Students
- C. Physically/mentally challenged
- D. International visitors
- E. Organized tour groups
- F. Other

## II. Organizational tools

- A. Traditional outline "I.A.1.a."
- B. Block outline
- C. Mind-mapping
- D. Brainstorming
- E. Memory model
- F. Other

## III. Organizational theory

- A. Why?
  - 1. What's in it for me?
  - 2. What's in it for them?

## IV. Organizational structure

- A. Introduction
  - 1. Self identification
  - 2. Agency identification
  - 3. Safety message/announcements
  - 4. Introduction of theme - though not necessarily in an obvious, self-conscious way, the best themes clearly emerge from the talk. Not every talk must follow the structure, "Tell them what you will tell them, tell them, and then tell them what you told them."
- B. Transitions
  - 1. Importance
  - 2. Types

**C. Body**

1. Determining the main points
2. Organizing main points
  - a. cohesive development through logical flow
3. Development of theme

**D. Conclusion**

1. Summation of main points
2. Restatement of theme
  - a. Preservation message
  - b. Answers "so what?"
1. Why do the talk?
2. What is value to visitor?
3. Building a constituency
4. Advocating a course of action

**E. Citations (References)**

1. List of research materials and texts used

**RESOURCES**

NPS management documents including General Management Plans, Interpretive Prospectus, Resource Management Plan, Statement for Management, NPS-6, NPS-77, NPS 28, and others.

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

*Environmental Interpretation-A Practical Guide*, by Sam Ham, Part Two, Chapter 3, North American Press, 1992.

*Interpretation for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Fifteen Guiding Principles for Interpreting Nature and Culture*, Larry Beck and Ted Cable, Sagamore Publishing, 1998.

*Interpreting for Historic Sites*, William T. Alderson and Shirley Payne Low, AASLH, 1976.

*Interpreting for Park Visitors*, William J. Lewis, Acorn Press, 1989.

*Interpreting Our Heritage*, Freeman Tilden, University of North Carolina Press, 1957.

*Interpreting the Environment*, Grant Sharpe, Chapter 9, John Wiley and Sons, 1982.

*Interpretive Skills Lesson Plan: "Preparing and Presenting an Interpretive Talk"* rev. by Smitty Parratt/Sheila Cooke-Keyser, 1992.

*The Interpreter's Guidebook: Techniques for Programs and Presentations*, Regnier, Zimmerman and Gross, University of Wisconsin, 1992.

*Writing the Natural Way*, Gabrielle Lusser Rico.

*I Can See You Naked*, Ron Hoff

#### **SUGGESTED DEVELOPMENTAL ACTIVITIES**

1. Write a one-page essay with references that describes the different audiences that visit their park.
2. Explain two or more different ways of organizing an interpretive talk. Produce an outline including an introduction, body, transitions, conclusion, and citation of references, and a graph which indicates understanding of how tangible/intangible and universal linkages occur within the talk.
3. Review two or more outlines, Interpretive Service Plans, planning documents, transcripts of prepared speeches, and other similar organizational methods noting strengths, weaknesses, thoroughness, and clarity.

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<http://www.nps.gov/idp/interp/103/talkorg.htm>

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## **Component for Module 103**

# **Interpretive Program Research**

### **PURPOSE**

Knowledge of the resource and accurate, responsible information are fundamental elements of the interpretive equation. This component provides a rationale for research and outlines a strategy to assure that the interpreter has complete, accurate information within his/her programs, and can provide citations to visitors who request more detailed information on resource/interpretive topics.

### **OBJECTIVES**

Upon completion of this component learners will be able to:

- explain why research is important and should be accurate, credible, and diverse;
- identify the basic steps of research methodology; locating, evaluating, and selecting sources;
- list three types of park documents and non-NPS documents which serve as sources of information when developing interpretive programs including historical or natural science information and resource management issues;
- describe the difference between primary and secondary sources;
- identify bias, reliability, multiple points of view, and relevance in research sources;
- analyze, evaluate, select, organize and footnote appropriate research material.

### **APPROACH**

Learners, instructors, and supervisors might use lecture, group discussion, group participatory exercise, as well as individual activities. If used, guided group brainstorming and research material identification and evaluation exercises should culminate in an opportunity for interpreters to locate, identify, and assess the reliability, relevance, and bias of raw information. The learner will be able to identify internal and external evidence to determine bias in research material and be able to develop footnotes and bibliographies for interpretive programs and media as a result of this active approach.

This component provides an opportunity to reinforce [Module 101--Fulfilling the NPS Mission: The Process of Interpretation](#), and the interpretive equation. Knowledge of the resource is, to a very large degree, subject matter knowledge.

### **CONTENT OUTLINE:**

#### I. Professionalism

##### A. Accuracy and integrity in interpretive programs

B. Credibility

1. Elements of good research material.

a. Objectivity

b. Balance

c. Credibility

d. Verifiability

e. Relevance to themes

f. Support of compelling story

II. Sources of information within parks and out of parks

A. Define primary and secondary sources

B. Outside resources

1. Local libraries

2. Local historical or conservation societies

3. Archives (census records, etc.)

4. Recorded oral history collections, natural history collections

5. Multi-media sources (video documentaries, Internet, etc.)

6. Professional journals

7. Research sources for African-American, Native American, woman's studies, social history, conservation organizations, botanical and wildlife sources

8. Universities--libraries, subject matter experts, CPSUs and CPEUs

C. Park resources

1. Park brochure

2. Site bulletins

3. Information handouts

4. Research - personnel from other disciplines are sources of information.

5. Park library and reference books

6. Park collections, natural and historical

7. Park maps and physical previewing of park site as a research tool

D. Other park resources

1. Enabling legislation and hearings
2. General Management Plan (GMP)
3. DO-6
4. Interpretive Prospectus
5. Statement for Interpretation
6. Management documents
7. Resource management plans
8. Individual Service Plans (ISPs)
9. Comprehensive Interpretive Plans

10. Others

E. Other NPS sources

1. Research reports from other parks on related topics
2. Technical information center
3. Professional journals - Park Science, CRM (indexes)
4. NPS-produced audiovisual materials
5. SO and central office subject matter experts -- natural resources center (water, air, and biological resource experts, information division, historians, etc.)

III. Research methodology

A. Critical examination of sources

B. Scientific method, historiography and cliomaticians

C. The general to the specific

E. Research material as tangible evidence to establish context and broader concepts

F. Identify critical material

G. Using material from other disciplines

H. Serendipity

I. Original vs. authentic resources

J. Internal vs. external evidence

- K. The need to question sources
- L. The need to mentally footnote
- M. Selecting and using research information
- N. The need to revise and update our records
- O. Importance of using current sources in scientific and historical research

#### IV. Technical skills

##### A. Bibliographies

##### B. Footnotes

V. Review the need for research to support programs, management issues and preservation concerns, and professional and personal credibility. The public perception of balance and scholarship in programs addressing natural and cultural resource issues/concepts will lead to effective programs and appreciation for the resource and the NPS mission.

Restate the need for diverse sources, balanced information, multiple points of view, and theme relation. Stress the need to organize research material to make interpretive connections to broader context and issues. The research process is a career-long endeavor.

## **RESOURCES**

### ***Park-related references:***

1. Statement for Management
2. Resource management plans and project statements
3. Enabling legislation
4. Interpretive Prospectus/Comprehensive Interpretive Plan
5. Statement for Interpretation
6. Existing Interpretive Service Plans (ISP's)
7. Subject matter material
8. Various items of original and secondary research
9. Park and area maps
10. Park site bulletins

*Interpretive Skills Lesson Plan: "[Interpretive Program Research](#)" rev. by Steve Thede/Steve*

Seven, 1992.

*The Art of Clear Thinking*

*The Critical Method In Historical Research And Writing*, Homer Carey Hockett, The MacMillan Company

*The Modern Researcher*, Jacques Barzun and Henry F. Graff, Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich.

#### **SUGGESTED DEVELOPMENTAL ACTIVITIES**

1. Research should be documented and supported. It should utilize primary sources when available with supporting sources. Research should incorporate the most current resource data available, while considering possible cultural and social biases.
2. Bibliographies and footnotes will be prepared according to an accepted style manual.
3. In preparation for an interpretive talk, use at least two sources to demonstrate attempts for balance, diversity, and theme context.
4. Write a one-page essay identifying the research used, stating why you felt it was effective and accurate, and describing the difference between primary and secondary sources.
5. Develop a bibliography, identifying primary and secondary sources, including a sample footnote.

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## **Component for Module 103**

# **Themes, Goals, and Objectives**

### **PURPOSE**

This component provides the interpreter with an essential framework to develop a logical progression of ideas which will lead the visitor to opportunities to make intellectual and emotional connections within the resource. Without this systematic approach, talks may become random and rambling.

### **OBJECTIVES**

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

- identify the rationale for using the interpretive talk;
- develop the theme, goals, and objectives for an interpretive talk;
- present a program with a relevant theme, developed cohesively through the program to allow audience to form intellectual and emotional connections with the resource.

### **APPROACH**

Effective interpretation connects the meanings of park resources to the interests of the visitor. The interpretive talk is one of many available tools that may be used to make this connection.

People assimilate information in many ways. The interpretive talk allows visitors to receive information in a personal, in depth, and interactive manner. It allows for give and take and discussion.

An interpretive talk can be brief, opportunistic, flexible, current, and quickly developed. A skilled interpreter will be adept at spontaneous development of themes, goals, and objectives, with compelling stories to support them at a moment's notice. The skills required to present an effective interpretive talk function as building blocks for other forms of interpretation.

Themes, goals, and objectives can be applied to all aspects of interpretive programming including talks, conducted activities, demonstrations, other personal services, writing, exhibit planning, design and construction, audio-visual services, publications, long- and short-range planning, and other applications. They are basic building blocks sometimes not quickly or easily understood and comprehended. Carefully developed, they direct and focus an interpretive program, providing a strong foundation for the audience to form their own intellectual and emotional connections with the meanings/significance inherent in the resource.

The process is theoretical and esoteric, requiring thought and careful selection of words and actions. It is a process that is often misunderstood. Many interpreters have a wealth of knowledge and information to share with visitors, partners, their peers, other agencies, and people who may never visit their park but rather receive information through publications and electronically. A tendency exists in presentations of any type to digress and try to "fit this neat

information in somewhere", resulting in both personal and media interpretation which lack focus and direction, and try to tell everything, instead of leaving room for discovery.

Interpreters come to understand themes, goals, and objectives in different ways. Many start with themes and comprehend the overall "take home message" they try to convey. Others do better when first considering goals because they seem most motivated by what appears to affect the visitor. Either approach, when fully understood, works well. Instructors, supervisors, and interpreters are encouraged to examine both.

It all revolves around wording. Goals generally refer to things you are striving to attain. You may or may not reach them, and goals in and of themselves may not be measurable. Goals try to "increase visitor understanding"; or "provoke visitors to learn more;" or "acquire an appreciation of the ..." Goals can also be thought of as "outcomes." The goals or outcomes of an individual's program or interpretive media should support the overall goals or outcomes as indicated in [Module 101--Fulfilling the NPS Mission: The Process of Interpretation:](#)

- Interpretation should provoke the visitor to think in personal terms about the value and meanings in each resource;
- Interpretation should provide experiences that strengthen the recognition, understanding, enjoyment, and preservation of the nation's heritage.

Objectives support the goal but are much more specific. They involve action, require the learners to do or complete something, and are measurable and testable if you choose. Usually objectives are written such as; "By the end of the activity, the learner will be able to ..." list, describe, demonstrate, complete, write, explain in their own words, or similar action items that require the completion of a specific task.

Themes, or theme statements, tie it all together. Properly constructed and worded they can be used as the opening of a presentation and also the conclusion. Themes act as a thesis supporting and expanding upon the goal, foreshadowing the objectives. Themes may be the trigger for creating meaning within visitors. A strong theme statement contains a tangible linked to an intangible; often the intangible is a universal concept. In a sophisticated and elevated form, the theme simply emerges, or becomes apparent in the presentation. At full performance, a theme is fully understood without being obviously stated.

Designing effective themes, goals, and objectives requires practice and persistence. The concepts can be learned in any order but it is essential that all be covered. Some will grasp them immediately and others will need more time. The information can be presented in a group setting or one on one utilizing a supervisor, mentor, or peer to provide guidance and assistance.

## **CONTENT OUTLINE:**

### I. Critical thinking

#### A. Why do a talk?

B. Characteristics/advantages

II. Definitions

A. Themes

B. Goals

C. Objectives

III. Theme

A. Thesis

B. Statement that ties activity together

C. Provides an opportunity to link tangible to intangible

IV. Goals

A. Esoteric

B. May or may not attain

C. Striving for

D. Words used in goals

V. Objectives

A. Specific

B. Behavioral; measurable

C. Support goal; use to attain goal

D. Words used in objectives; how to write; not all trivial, contain breadth and depth

VI. Relationships

A. How themes, goals, and objectives differ

B. How themes, goals, and objectives support each other

## **RESOURCES**

*Goal Analysis*, Robert F. Mager.

*Interpreting Our Heritage*, Freeman Tilden, University of North Carolina Press, 1957.

*Interpreting for Park Visitors*, William J. Lewis, Acorn Press, 1989.

*Interpreting for Historic Sites*; Alderson and Low, AASLH, 1976.

*Interpreting the Environment*, Grant Sharpe, John Wiley and Sons, 1982.

*Interpretive Skills Lesson Plan: "Themes and Objectives"* rev. by Dave Dahlen, 1992.

*Preparing Instructional Objectives*, Robert F. Mager, David S. Lake Publishers, 1984.

Park Specific Management Documents including; General Management Plan, Statement for Management, Interpretive Prospectus and others.

*The Good Guide: A Sourcebook for Interpreters, Docents, and Tour Guides*, Alison L.Grinder and E. Sue McCoy, Ironwood Publishing, 1989.

*The Interpreter's Guidebook: Techniques for Programs and Presentations*, Kathleen Regnier, Michael Gross and Ron Zimmerman, University of Wisconsin-SP Foundation Press, Inc., 1994.

*Where's the Me in Museum*; Waterfall and Grusin.

"Goals and Objectives in the Field of Interpretation" - NPS Handout

"Writing Behavioral Objectives" - NPS Handout

Group Exercise on Writing Behavioral Objectives - NPS Handout

**Other Resources:**

"A Program for Writing Instructional Objectives" - from Writing Behavioral Objectives: A Programmed Article, The Speech Teacher 21, 1972; Cegala, et. al.

Behavioral or Instructional Objectives courses at colleges or universities

**SUGGESTED DEVELOPMENTAL ACTIVITIES**

1. Analyze a talk and provide a one-page written explanation why it is, or is not, the most appropriate interpretive vehicle for that situation; or explain in writing a situation where an interpretive talk would be the most appropriate interpretive vehicle.
2. Observe two or more talks and identify the theme, goals, and objectives of each.
3. Demonstrate the differences between a goal and an objective by writing out samples of each for three different talks. One of these should then become the talk that continues to be developed in succeeding components. Theme statements shall also be included for each talk and shall relate the overall goal and objectives of the talk to the compelling story or established overall interpretive themes for the site.

Practice and review in this component can be accomplished by completing talks on one's own, observing talks given by others in person or on video, and reading and reviewing information

available in references.

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## **Component for Module 103**

# **Presentation Techniques**

### **PURPOSE**

The mechanical delivery of a program must be logical, connected, and easily followed by a cross-section of visitors. Effective presentation techniques let the interpreter maximize her/his chance to create an opportunity for the audience to form intellectual and emotional connections with the resource and develop a cohesive set of relevant ideas.

### **OBJECTIVES**

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

- identify at least three logistical issues an interpreter might encounter when presenting a talk and describe techniques for dealing with those issues;
- explain the rationale for including an ice breaker at the start of an interpretive talk and give two examples of possible ice breakers;
- identify, describe, and demonstrate at least three presentation tools appropriate for different audiences and resources; and
- compare three types of questioning strategies and explain the role they play in developing a cohesive idea throughout an interpretive talk.

### **APPROACH**

Once an interpreter researches the basic content and develops the overall structure of an interpretive talk, she/he is ready to craft a presentation that will effectively capture an audience's attention, sustain their interest throughout the program, and deal with any logistical issues the group may encounter. This component addresses a variety of techniques available to the interpreter in developing and presenting an effective talk. It covers methods for dealing with logistical issues that are frequently encountered during talks, methods for "breaking the ice" before a presentation to put the audience and interpreter at ease or set the tone for the program, the use of specific presentation tools to enliven a talk, and questioning strategies that stimulate audience interest and challenge them to think about the subject matter in depth. This component is not meant to comprehensively list tricks of the trade. Rather, it should be viewed as a resource guide or idea bank for the creative interpreter.

This component relates directly to, and builds on, the other components in Module 103--Preparing and Presenting an Interpretive Talk. It is recommended that the learner complete all the components of this module in sequence and relate each component's developmental assignments to the preparation and delivery of an interpretive talk which to be submitted for certification.

When individually studying this component or when teaching, it is important to continually relate the theoretical information to practical application during an interpretive talk. The

developmental assignments are designed to allow the learner to develop skills which can be applied to real situations. It is recommended that the learner complete all the developmental assignments, or at least a portion of each assignment, in order to have the experience of personally using each presentation technique. In a formal classroom setting this component will take approximately three to five hours to teach. Individuals working at their own pace and doing research may take longer to complete the component.

## **CONTENT OUTLINE:**

### I. Logistics

#### A. Rationale for planning logistics

1. Need to be ready for anything
2. Need to insure smoothest possible presentation
3. Importance of professional presentation of National Park Service (being there early etc...)
4. Other

#### B. Types of logistical issues

1. Sun in audience eyes
  2. Varied sizes of groups
    - a. very large groups
    - b. very small groups
  3. Moving groups to the talk site
  4. Weather changes
  5. Interpretive moments
  6. Major distractions
  7. Annoying sounds (airplanes, trains, coughing, etc.)
  8. Audio-visual equipment
  9. Special effects
  10. Acoustics
  11. Use of microphones/amplification
  12. Other
- #### C. Planning logistics

1. Preview talk site
2. Check all equipment
3. Look for new developments at talk site
4. Brainstorm all possible problems and plan solutions for each
5. Practice talk at site
6. Check position of sun at time of talk
7. Make rain/weather back-up plans
8. Other

## II. Ice breakers

### A. Appropriate use of ice breakers

1. Why include an ice breaker in an interpretive talk?
  - a. put group at ease
  - b. help relate talk to audience and involve audience
  - c. help overcome "stage fright"
  - d. set tone of talk
  - e. melt barriers between strangers
  - f. create group dynamic
  - g. learn audience's mood
  - h. ease tension
  - i. increase group energy level
  - j. other
2. How to select an appropriate ice breaker
  - a. consider content of talk
  - b. assess group, consider their possible response/openness
  - c. consider setting for talk
  - d. consider size and capabilities of group
  - e. other

B. Types of ice breakers

1. Informal discussion/mingling
2. Openers and warm-ups
3. Getting acquainted
4. Energizers and tension reducers
5. Games and brainteasers
6. Other

III. Presentation tools

A. Appropriate use of presentation tools

1. Why do we use presentation tools during talks?
  - a. to seize and sustain audience interest
  - b. to emphasize key points
  - c. to add variety and theatrical interest to presentation
2. When is it appropriate to use presentation tools?
  - a. introduction
  - b. body
  - c. conclusion
  - d. transitions
3. How to select an appropriate tool
  - a. understanding the variety of tools available and what they accomplish
  - b. being selective (not using too many or too few tools)
  - c. effective repeated use of a single tool

B. The tools

1. Grabber
2. Teaser
3. Forecasting
4. Predict outline

5. Triphammer
  6. U-Turn
  7. Silence
  8. Volume/pitch/voice modulation
  9. Choice of words (some are more descriptive than others)
  10. Gestures
  11. Gold plated correction
  12. Recapitulate
  13. Memorize key portions (example: ending paragraph)
  14. Quotes, pictures or other primary documents
  15. Props
  16. Stories
  17. Analogies
  18. Anecdotes
  19. Connections with audience (example: referring to where someone is from or a fact you learned about a person or family before the program.)
  20. Humor
  21. Others  
(Note: This is not a comprehensive list but should not diverge into interpretive techniques covered in later modules. These techniques should relate directly to tools which can be used during a talk.)
- IV. Questioning strategies
- A. Reasons for including questions in a talk
    1. Spark audience interest
    2. Relate to audience on a personal level
    3. Maintain audience involvement
    4. Provoke audience to think about a subject/resource in depth and become personally invested or involved in the subject/resource
    5. Leave audience with questions and a hunger for more information

6. Other

B. Types of questions

1. Memory/recall

2. Open-ended vs. close-ended

3. Group directed/individual directed

4. Rhetorical

5. Judgmental

C. When to use questions

1. Introduction

2. Body

3. Conclusion

4. Transitions

D. Selecting appropriate questions (relate situations to specific types of questions)

1. Fitting the type of question with the talk's subject matter

2. Use of specific types of questions at different points in the talk

3. Returning to the same question periodically throughout the talk

4. Building the complexity of questions throughout the talk

5. Stimulating higher-order thinking skills as talk builds (moving visitors from concrete to abstract thinking)

6. Other

## **RESOURCES**

*Interpretation for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Fifteen Guiding Principles for Interpreting Nature and Culture*, Larry Beck and Ted Cable, Sagamore Publishing, 1998.

*Interpreting for Park Visitors*, William J. Lewis, Acorn Press, 1989, pp. 66-91.

*Interpretive Skills Lesson Plans*: "[Preparing and Presenting the Talk](#)" rev. by Smitty Parratt/Sheila Cooke-Keyser, 1992; "[Questioning Techniques](#)" rev. Karen Cucurullo, 1992; "[Communications](#)" rev. by Bill Fuchs, 1992.

*The Encyclopedia of Ice Breakers: Structured Activities That Warm-Up, Motivate, Challenge,*

*Acquaint and Energize*, S. Forbess-Greene, University Associates, Inc., 1983.

*The Good Guide: A Sourcebook for Interpreters, Docents and Tour Guides*, A.L. Grinder and E.S. McCoy, Ironwood Publishing, Scottsdale, AZ, 1983, pp. 51-85.

*The Interpreter's Guidebook: Techniques for Programs and Presentations*, K. Regnier, M. Gross and R. Zimmerman, UW-SP Foundation Press, Inc., 1994, pp. 21-32.

*The Speakers Handbook*, D. Sprague and D. Stuart, 1992.

*13 Steps to Better Speech Effectiveness*, Donald H. Ecroyd, Eastern National Parks and Monuments Association, 1988.

(Add additional resources such as video of Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream Speech.")

### **SUGGESTED DEVELOPMENTAL ACTIVITIES**

1. Logistics: Choose a specific setting and topic for an interpretive talk and write a list of potential logistical concerns that could arise during the talk. Also list possible solutions for each logistical concern identified.

The list of logistical concerns should be comprehensive and suggested solutions appropriate.

2. Ice Breakers: Given an outline of an interpretive talk, develop an ice breaker for use prior to the talk. The ice breaker should be appropriate for the audience, setting, and content of the talk.

3. Presentation Tools: During a 15-minute presentation, use at least three different presentation techniques. Demonstrate the correct and effective use of at least three presentation techniques.

4. Questioning Strategies: Given an outline of an interpretive talk, write questions to add to the talk and choose where they would be added. The questions will demonstrate appropriate use of questioning strategies. Questions should be placed at strategic times during the talk and have the potential to simulate audience interest and provoke higher-order thinking.

5. Watch four different interpretive talks, speeches, or religious sermons (in person or on video/TV) and list all the presentation tools you observe the speakers using. Explain how the tools used in each instance either enhanced or detracted from the overall presentation. Develop and present four talks, each three minutes long, which demonstrate the use of four different presentation tools. Have someone view the talks and provide you with feedback on the use of the tools. Or videotape and critique the talks yourself.

6. Read three talk outlines or Individual Service Plans and develop an ice breaker for each talk. Describe why you chose each ice breaker and justify why you think it is an appropriate way to start the particular talk. (Talk outlines are frequently on file in parks.)

7. Write three examples of each type of question: Memory; convergent; divergent; and judgmental. Using one of the talk outlines from the previous assignment, write three questions

that could be used during the talk. Explain when and why you would ask each question during the talk.

8. Choose a site at your park where you would like to present a 10-to-15 minute interpretive talk on a particular topic. Brainstorm all the possible logistical details you will need to consider when preparing the talk for use at that site. Develop strategies for handling all the possible logistical concerns and situations you might encounter during the presentation.

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## **Component for Module 103**

# **Delivering an Interpretive Talk and Assessing its Interpretive Value**

### **PURPOSE**

This component covers presentation skills, including verbal, non-verbal, and feedback processes to self-develop/improve the interpretive talk.

### **OBJECTIVES**

Upon completing this component, the learner will be able to:

- demonstrate effective use of verbal and non-verbal presentation skills;
- describe the purpose and value of self-assessment and auditing;
- employ knowledge of non-verbal and verbal feedback to read an audience and adjust presentation as needed.

### **APPROACH**

Study and practice of delivery techniques is part of *Module 103--Preparing and Presenting an Interpretive Talk*. In completing the study of the material in this module, each learner will have the opportunity to develop self-confidence, assess his/her primary speaking instrument - the voice - practice pronunciation and enunciation, develop gestures and non-verbal communication skills, read audience feedback, practice presenting talks, assess performance, and experience the value of peer review and auditing.

Some material within this component can be learned through reading or classroom work, which may take an average of 16 to 24 hours. Actual practice developing skills will require concentrated effort over time, perhaps one to three months.

Practice and opportunities to present interpretive talks are essential for developing the skills outlined in this component. This component describes the culminating project for the entire Module 103 and presents a critical opportunity for the learner to practice and develop preparation and presentation skills. Practice, accompanied by self-assessment and peer or supervisor feedback, will build self-confidence and are essential for developing the presentation skills the learner needs to demonstrate benchmark competency.

### **CONTENT OUTLINE:**

#### **I. Delivery**

##### **A. Comfort level**

###### **1. Dealing with anxieties**

2. Assessing image - How are you perceived?

a. Appearance (neat, clean, uniform or not)

b. Attitude (friendly, courteous, patient, approachable, helpful, thick-skinned, "professional")

B. Developing self-confidence

1. Preparation

2. Knowledge

3. Practice

C. Voice

1. Volume

2. Rate (average 120-180 words/minute)

3. Pitch (the tonal level of speech - low, medium, high)

4. Diction

a. Articulation and enunciation

b. Pronunciation

D. Gestures

1. Purpose - punctuate your message

a. emphasis

b. to direct attention

c. to control group

2. Types

a. Index finger: to point out, indicate direction, challenge, count

b. Palms up: to appeal to audience, present idea, request, solution

c. Palms down: calming gesture, downward slice to condemn or reject

d. Fist-expression of strong feeling

3. Good gestures are natural, definite, timed, appropriate, and enthusiastic

E. Non-verbal language

1. Posture

2. Eye contact
3. Movement for emphasis
4. Facial expressions
5. Other pitfalls

F. Reading the audience - visual clues

1. Posture, movement
2. Eye contact
3. Facial expressions
4. Questions

G. Presenting a talk - practice - assessing your effectiveness

1. Tape recording (evaluate your voice, content of your talk, grammar, vocabulary, diction, audience feedback)
2. Videotape (evaluate verbal and non-verbal communication skills, audience reaction, content of talk, logistics, etc.)
3. Audience feedback (do they look at you, answer questions, smile, applaud, thank you, what kind of comments do they make?)
4. Observing others to evaluate yourself (comparison, identify techniques to emulate, practice being a good audience)
  - a. Co-workers
  - b. "Famous" speakers
  - c. Museum professionals
  - d. Other parks

H. Evaluation and feedback

1. Why? (Tool for improving speaking and presentation skills)
2. Peer audits - have others watch your talks to give you feedback
3. Supervisor audit

## **RESOURCES**

### ***BOOKS***

*A Manual for Group Leaders*, Marilyn Bates and C.D. Johnson, Fullerton, CA; Orange County

Department of Education, 1971.

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

*Interpreting for Park Visitors*, William J. Lewis, Acorn Press, 1987, (Self-assessment tools).

*Interpreting Our Heritage*, Freeman Tilden, University of North Carolina Press, 1957.

*Interpretive Skills Lesson Plans: "Preparing and Presenting Talks"* rev. by Smitty Parratt/Shiela Cooke-Keyser, 1992; *"Communications"* rev. by Bill Fuchs, 1992.

*The Interpreter's Guidebook: Techniques for Programs and Presentations*, Kathleen Regnier, Michael Gross and Ron Zimmerman, University of Wisconsin-SP Foundation Press, Inc., 1994.

*The Gentle Art of Verbal Self-Defense*, Suzette Haden Elgin, Prentice-Hall Press, 1980.

*The Last Word on the Gentle Art of Verbal Self-Defense*, Suzette Haden Elgin, Prentice-Hall Press, 1987.

*13 Steps to Better Speech Effectiveness*, Donald H. Ecroyd, Eastern National Parks and Monuments Association, 1988.

### **On Body Language:**

*Interpretive Skills Lesson Plans*, *"Communications"* rev. by Bill Fuchs, 1992, handouts pp. 28-34; "Communications" 1983, articulation, pronunciation exercise handouts.

Toastmasters Club

### **Videos**

Speaking One to One Thousand

Video, Speeches of John F. Kennedy, Martin Luther King, Paul Harvey, etc.

Park, Visitor, Interpreter, NPS videos.

Bravo! What a Presentation

Add Impact to Your Presentation

## **SUGGESTED DEVELOPMENTAL ACTIVITIES**

1. Present a three minute talk in front of a group of colleagues. The group will critique the presentation and provide positive feedback and constructive feedback on your delivery skills. Note particularly whether you were able to link tangible facts/things to intangible ideas or concepts within the audience. The talk will be on an impromptu topic because the delivery skills are important here. Effective skills are those that contribute to the success of the presentation. Non-effective skills are those that distract listeners from your message and those that detract

from your professional image. It should be evident in most members of the audience that tangible/intangible linkages in this short presentation made it possible for them to create formative meaning and value in the subject of the talk.

2. Design a self-assessment audit form for your interpretive talks. The form will identify areas in which feedback is most important and useful for developing personal presentation skills, and graphically depict the tangible/intangible linkages attempted within a presentation. The form should identify at least 10 delivery skills to be observed in a talk presentation (based on the list in the content outline in this component). Choice of skills should reflect areas of identified need based on your previous experience or on feedback from a supervisor or certifiers.

3. Given a series of written role-playing scenarios where audience behavior/feedback is described, write a description of how to react and/or alter the presentation. For each scenario, identify the audience behavior/feedback described and the written description of how you should react to match the situation.

Sample scenarios:

a) The audience is composed of 30-40 adults. Five minutes into the talk you notice that several people will not return your eye contact. Two people in the back are whispering to each other intermittently. One person in the front row is crocheting. Ten minutes into the talk a man in the third row looks sleepy, another gets up and leaves the room, three minutes later, two more people leave the group.

b) The audience is composed of ten people, two separate families: one a mother, father, and two children under age ten; the other a mother, grandmother, father, two children under eight, and an infant. The infant is asleep. The smallest children have trouble standing still. All the parents return eye contact intermittently while keeping an eye on their children. All questions you ask are answered. Members of the group ask questions for further information or clarification about what you have described.

c) The audience is composed of fifteen people, mixed adults and children, with the youngest child about age four. Most members of the group return your eye contact, several do so intently. At each break in the talk there are questions but as you progress with the talk, questions from two members of the group increase about related subjects and asking for very specific detail. Other members of the group have trouble standing still, two have arms folded on their chests, and at least two more stop returning eye contact. The children fidget.

4) Read aloud into a tape recorder from a book, memo, letter, newspaper, or other source as if speaking to an audience. Listen to the tape and count the words per minute. The average rate of speaking is 120-180 words/minute. If the rate is slower or faster than this average, comprehension may be sacrificed for some segment of the audience. Practice until you feel the difference in speaking rate and until you are comfortable.

5) Read the following paragraph aloud into a tape recorder and then listen to the recording:

"You wished to know all about my grandfather. Well, he is nearly 93 years old; he dresses himself in an ancient black frock coat, usually minus several buttons; yet he still

thinks as swiftly as ever. A long, flowing beard clings to his chin, giving those who observe him a pronounced feeling of the utmost respect. When he speaks, his voice is just a bit cracked and quivers a trifle. Twice each day he plays skillfully and with zest upon our small organ. Except in the winter when the ooze or snow or ice prevents, he slowly takes a short walk in the open air each day. We have urged him to walk more and smoke less, but he always answers, "Banana Oil!" Grandfather likes to be modern in his language."

[This paragraph was devised by Dr. Charles Van Riper of Western Michigan University to contain all of the speech sounds in the English language. It was used to test astronaut candidates in the Mercury program to see how clearly their voices would transmit from a space capsule. (Interpretive Skills "Communications" Lesson Plan, SER, 1983).] The assignment goal is to assess and practice articulation, determining whether all the words are understandable. Ask a friend or co-worker to listen to the recording. Does the listener understand all the words? Record the paragraph a second time. Notice that articulating the words slows down the rate of speaking. Practice until the articulation and rate work together comfortably (and sound like normal speech) to aid the comprehension of the message.

- 6) Present a three-minute talk in front of a video camera. The talk can be a children's story, a segment of a fifteen-minute talk, or any other familiar topic. The intent is to observe delivery style, especially the non-verbal aspects such as gestures, mannerisms, approachability, attitude, confidence, and friendliness. Attempts to connect facts to universal concepts should be evident.
- 7) Research, develop, and present a 15-minute interpretive talk to be videotaped in front of a group of colleagues. The group will critique the presentation and provide positive feedback and constructive feedback. Design a personal evaluation form and watch the video to assess your interpretive effectiveness: evaluation will include a discussion of facts/universal concepts or tangibles to intangibles; verbal and non-verbal communication skills, audience reaction, content of talk, logistics. The evaluation should include several written paragraphs to describing what you thought of the presentation, how the audience responded (including whether they maintained eye contact, answered/asked questions, smiled, applauded, said thank you), and what skills and techniques need to be practiced and developed.

Practice talk preparation and presentation skills!

This assignment (#7) presents the opportunity to incorporate the concepts of [Module 101-- Fulfilling the NPS Mission: The Process of Interpretation](#) with practice in the preparing and presenting of an interpretive talk. Upon completion of Module 103, the same interpretive talk can be polished and formally presented to demonstrate benchmark competency.

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### **Additional Developmental Activities (Optional)**

1. Pronunciation skills. With a group of friends and/or co-workers, discuss the following list of words (and others you may add):

keptforeheadcreek  
environmentprecedentfriend  
sleptmischievousroute  
arcticirrelevantAmerican  
batteryhundredget  
governmenttheatertheir  
miserableintroductioncaught  
acrossexquisitehere  
temperatureintegralunited  
athleticsuperfluousour  
statisticsimpotentdown  
filmresourcewater

Each person will take a turn at saying each word on the list. The group will compare and discuss the differences in pronunciation. The group will also discuss who's right. They may also consider local custom, and as a group choose the pronunciation that most people will understand.

2. Find a video and text of a famous speech - i.e., John F. Kennedy's Inaugural Address, or Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech. First, read the speech silently, then aloud. Then watch a video of the same speech. Next, listen to the video but do not watch it. Next, watch the video with the sound turned off to observe the speaker's physical movements and gestures. Then write an essay discussing observations on the speaker's research, structure, techniques, and delivery; concluded with a paragraph describing what can be applied to your own preparation or delivery techniques.
3. Join or form a peer coaching group asking others to provide positive feedback and constructive criticism on his/her talk(s). Watch the talks of others and provide feedback to them.
4. Ask your supervisor for a talk audit to receive positive reinforcement and recommendations for improvement.

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<http://www.nps.gov/idp/interp/103/delivery.htm>

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