

INTERPRETIVE SKILLS III-A

LESSON PLAN: 10

SESSION TITLE: INTERPRETING FROM DIVERSE POINTS OF VIEW

SESSION LENGTH: 2 Hours **PREPARED BY:** A. Jackson
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OBJECTIVES: At the end of this session, participants will be able to:

1. For each of three NPS areas, list at least two different ethnic viewpoints concerning a common issue(s);
2. For each of three NPS areas, list at least two different economic or job-related viewpoints concerning a common issue(s);
3. For each of three NPS areas, list at least two different special interest group viewpoints concerning a common issue(s);
4. List two reasons management may decide not to interpret a point of view.

TRAINING AIDS: Flip Charts, Markers, Meeting Areas for groups, Materials for Skit (optional)

HANDOUTS: NPS Areas Associated with Ethnic and Racial Minorities

Content	Method	Time
I. Introduction		
Have the participants line up side by side in front of the class. Instruct them to "get themselves in order". Do not tell them what kind of order. They may order themselves by height, age, color or clothing or other parameters. When they have finished, ask them how they ordered themselves. Ask them about other ways they could have ordered themselves. Is one of the ways more correct than another? Is there a right or wrong?	Opener	10 Minutes
Define the phrase "interpreting from diverse points of view". Discuss vertical and horizontal modes of thinking. Vertical thinking is based on a hierarchy where options are organized best to worst. Horizontal thinking is based on a non-judgmental portrayal of ideas. There is no right or wrong. Groups of people develop points of view; opposing points of view may then be thought of as "wrong". Tie into Lesson 2, Attitudes and Biases.	Lecture	5 Minutes

Content	Method	Time
<p>II.Points of View</p> <p>A.Share two positive examples of parks interpreting diverse points of view. For example, the interpretation at Arizona Memorial or Little Big Horn.</p> <p>B.Introduction of exercise. Categorizing points of view is subjective and not necessarily all-inclusive. Diverse points of view related to NPS issues in this lesson are subjectively divided into three categories. In each category, we can list varying points of view for common issues. Listed below are the three categories and specific examples of diverse points of view as seed sources for instruction.</p> <p>1.Ethnic</p> <p>a.Black and White points of view. At Kennesaw Mountain, the contribution of black troops in the Civil War is often not interpreted.</p> <p>b.Conflict between Russia (which tried to exclude the United States from Russian-America) and the United States (which tried to protect rights of citizens to pursue commercial enterprises). U.S. looked at "Alaska" as stepping stone to Orient and at sea otters, whaling, ice, and commercial fishing. Russia felt it had to sell "Alaska" or U.S. would take it anyway. Russia was outmatched and overextended, but it took 80 years of American pressure for Russia to reluctantly sell "Seward's folly". How do we interpret this?</p> <p>2.Economic</p> <p>a.Timber marketing and preservation of ancient forest viewpoints. At Olympic National Park, those involved in timber marketing feel that their economic security and that of the nation is more important than preservation of a few threatened species. We should open more areas, including the park, to logging. Those favoring preservation site the importance of biodiversity.</p>	Lecture	5 minutes

Content	Method	Time
<p>2.Economic (continued)</p> <p>b.Mineral extraction in Death Valley National Monument. The problem of whether to exclude mines from the boundary by making the monument smaller, to allow mining to continue under federal control, or to buy the claims for 60 million (1980).</p> <p>c.Land acquisition of private land holdings. Lake Chelan NRA, Indiana Dunes NL.</p> <p>d.MCA concession in Yosemite had visions of a major resort and movie set in Yosemite Valley and exerted political pressure, bypassing the NPS, to attempt bringing the vision into reality.</p>	<p>Lecture cont.</p>	
<p>3.Special Interest Groups</p> <p>a.Sierra Club, a conservation agency which sued Lake Chelan NRA for producing management documents without conducting an environmental impact study.</p> <p>b.Interagency Grizzly Bear Recovery Team. In North Cascades National Park, the IGBC promotes recovery of grizzly bears in the North Cascades ecosystem; ranchers view the recovery in terms of economic loss and backpackers in terms of physical safety.</p> <p>c.Snowmobile groups. In Grand Teton National Park, efforts of environmental groups to close the Potholes (20,000 acres of elk calving area) to snowmobiles and concurrent resistance by snowmobile group(s).</p>		
<p>C.Divide the class into groups of four. Make at least two of the groups very homogeneous (such as all male, all from history parks, all under 30), with other groups being heterogeneous. Give each group an assignment in either the ethnic, economic/professional, or special interest group category. They are to brainstorm as many examples of situations where there is more than one point of view on an issue(s) as possible in 5 minutes. During the next 15 minutes, they select one of the scenarios they listed and brainstorm ways to interpret the diverse points of view in that situation (such as publications, talks, exhibits). They should get into as much detail as possible in the time allowed.</p>	<p>Brainstorm</p>	<p>20 Minutes</p>

Content	Method	Time
<p>D.The groups then return to the classroom. List the examples in the first category (ethnic) on a flip chart for each group which worked in that category. Then open up the listing to the class. Finally, each of the three groups presents their solutions to interpretation in one of these situations. Then move to the next categories (economics/professional, and finally to special interest groups) and repeat the procedure.</p>	Discussion	30 Minutes
<p>E.Summarize. There are many different points of view on a number of park-related issues. Remember that each of these situations occurred within the context of larger systems in the world. None is inherently right or wrong. It is usually inappropriate to interpret from the viewpoint of one group. Even when performing living history, a second character should be available for the "other side"; in some manner, maintain an unbiased frame of reference. Interpretation should remain neutral or portray the varied points of view with equal emphasis. Also discuss whether the make up of the small groups affected the outcome of the brainstorming and discussion.</p>	Lecture	5 Minutes
<p>Break</p>	Break	10 Minutes
<p>III.Political Reality</p>		
<p>A.Write this quote from <u>National Parks in Crisis</u> on the flip chart/black board: Park officials ... know they can be transferred or ruined by standing on principle before the politically powerful.</p>	Skit or Lecture	10 Minutes
<p>Either instructors perform a skit demonstrating a politically sensitive issue where full disclosure of the situation is inadvisable or introduce the discussion in part B.</p>		
<p>Sample skit: Superintendent receives a memo and reads it aloud. It contains information that, if released, could cause a law suit against the park. The superintendent then calls a field supervisor and communicates an edited version of the memo. The Superintendent tells the field supervisor that rangers should not interpret this subject, due to its political sensitivity, until further notice. The field supervisor meets with the field interpreter. The supervisor then instructs the field interpreter to not interpret this subject until further notice, but gives no reasons for the edict. Later, the field interpreter is questioned in detail by a visitor about the forbidden topic.</p>		

Content	Method	Time
<p>B. Political issues are confronted daily by park management. Some issues are debated openly; interpretation may be encouraged. Others involve sensitive legal issues where full disclosure could result in financial or other liability. Keep discussions of politically sensitive issues in the chain of command.</p> <p>Examples of openly discussed controversial issues are shooting goats in Olympic National Park, permitting natural fires within prescription to burn, the ethnic background of Frederick Douglas, or facilitating grizzly bear recovery in North Cascades National Park.</p> <p>Examples of sensitive issues where management may prescribe silence include disclosing plans for utilizing a facility which recently came into NPS ownership and where a law suit is pending and disclosing a decision before an interagency meeting where such decision is to be made.</p> <p>Valid situations will arise where confidentiality is necessary due to legal mandates and/or management judgement. Those who disclose that which management wishes to remain confidential might risk their employment or career path; it could have disastrous results to the political and financial status of the park. Usually, only employees on a need-to-know basis will know about these issues.</p> <p>Case studies illustrate sensitivities. A superintendent of Great Smoky Mountains National Park was transferred in 1978 after closing a cozy fishing retreat maintained with public funds for a few politically privileged North Carolinians.</p>	<p>Lecture</p>	<p>5 Minutes</p>

Content	Method	Time
<p>IV. Conclusion</p> <p>Everyone has a set of opinions or perspectives on many issues. Often, these opinions are considered to be "right", with differing opinions considered "wrong". These are simply value judgments we place on stances. We can sometimes group people with like opinions based on ethical, economical or professional, or special interest affiliation. Often these groups have different points of view about NPS issues. Interpreters in both personal and non-personal approaches should be careful to remain neutral or talk about both sides of the coin and not tell a one-sided story.</p>	Lecture	5 Minutes
Break	Break	10 Minutes

References:

1. Ancient Peoples and Cultures of Death Valley National Monument, William J. Wallace and Edith Wallace, Acoma Books, Ramona CA, 1978.
2. The American Mosaic - Preserving a Nations Heritage, edited by Robert E. Stipe and Antoinette J. Lee, J. D. Lucas Printing Company, Baltimore MD, 1987. (reference Chapter 6; Discovering Old Cultures in the New World; The Role of Ethnicity, page 179)
3. Challenge of the Big Trees - of Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks, Larry Dilsaver and William Tweed, Sequoia Natural History Association, Three Rivers CA, 1990.
4. Conflict on the Northwest Coast - American Russian Rivalry in the Pacific Northwest, Howard Kushner, Greenwood Press, Westport CT, 1975.
5. Mountains without Handrails - Reflections on the National Parks, Joseph L. Sax, The University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor MI, 1980.
6. Mystic Chords of Memory: The Transformation of Tradition in American Culture, Michael Kammen, Alfred A. Knopf Publisher, New York, 1991.
7. National Parks for a New Generation - Visions, Realities, Prospect - A Report from the Conservation Foundation, sponsored by the Richard King Mellon Foundation, Washington D. C., 1985.
8. National Parks in Crisis; edited by Eugenia Connally; National Parks and Conservation Association, Washington D. C., 1982.
9. National Parks - The American Experience, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln NB, 1979.
10. Organizational Values and Political Powers: The Forest Service versus the Olympic National Park, Ben W. Twight, The Pennsylvania State University Press PA, 1983.
11. Sacred Ground: Americans and Their Battlefields, Ed Linenthal.