Component for Module 370

Working with Teachers and Group Leaders

PURPOSE:
To successfully develop an effective education program the interpreter must know the audience. Schools, teachers, and community groups have different schedules, interests, expectations, and motivations for visiting than do general public audiences. This component introduces this new audience, describes ways to identify, understand, interest, and target schools, teachers, and community groups.

OBJECTIVES:
Upon completion of this component, the learner will be able to:
- List three advantages of working closely with schools, teachers, and organized group leaders;
- List at least three sources of information about educational or community groups.
- Describe the steps and strategies for conducting a successful group leader/teacher workshop.

APPROACH:
Working closely with schools, teachers, and community groups is essential for any park education program to be successful. Developing programs in a vacuum can lead to disappointments and wasted time, effort, and money. Park staff may develop a program based on park goals or needs, for example, only to find that local schools have no buses or funding available for field trips! Or the park may have only one employee available to work with each school bus and find out that the school districts require buses used on field trips to be full (two classes, up to 72 students)! Or a park program may target grade 4 and staff will wonder why more classes do not attend until they realize that the local school curriculum does not include the same subject until grade 6? Perhaps demand far exceeds what the park staffing levels or resources can handle? These are issues to be considered when developing a new education program.

This component addresses all organized groups with *education* as a central goal or purpose. Educational groups are grouped in three categories: schools, youth groups, and adult groups. While many park rangers are most familiar with school curriculum and teacher's lesson plans, other organized groups also use a curriculum or a structured plan for learning. Likewise it is important that field rangers know education reform and currents issues, especially contemporary opinions on standardized the impact of standardized tests and education standards.
Examples of educational groups include schools, boy scouts, girl scouts, Elderhostel, after-school programs, home schoolers, summer camps, Hosteling International, Sierra Club work groups, international service groups, religious groups, and Junior Rangers. As with any interpretive effort, knowing the audience is key to your success.

CONTENT OUTLINE
I. Successful education programs start by working with schools, teachers, and   community groups.
    A. Ensures park program feasible for local schools, community group

1. Interest
2. Field trip policies
3. Funding
4. Bus scheduling
5. Average class size
6. Average number of students per trip

B. Ensures park program relevant to school curriculum, organizational goals
C. Involving teachers/community group coordinators in planning gives sense
   of ownership
D. Markets program- creates school, teacher, community group endorsement
E. Provides important insights for program development/presentation
    1. Teaching/presentation strategies
    2. Developmental appropriateness
    3. Match program and park resources to school curriculum, teacher's lesson plans, or community group goals

F. Finds out teachers' needs/community group goals

G. Helps NPS staff remain/become current on what's going on in schools/community
    1. Learn teacher lingo
    2. Classroom/daily problems and concerns
    3. Creates mutual respect for each other as professionals, resources

H. Provides mutual benefits
    1. Grants
    2. Special projects
    3. Visitation
    4. Important audience for park story/goals- builds community support

II. Know your audience
   A. Schools
      1. Background
         a. Type and mission of each (public, parochial, private, home school, charter)
         b. School organizational Structure (ex. K-5, 6-8, 9-12; K-6, 7-9, 10-12;)
         c. Teaching as a Profession: Course of study, certification requirements
         d. Education reform/current issues in education/community schools

   B. Youth Groups
      1. Boy Scouts
         a. Mission/goals/purpose
         b. Organizational structure
         c. Program examples
      2. Girl Scouts
         a. Mission/goals/purpose
         b. Organizational structure

            c. Program examples
      3. Boys Clubs/Girls Clubs/Other
            a. Mission/goals/purpose
            b. Organizational structure
            c. Program examples

  C. Adult Groups
      1. Elderhostel
            a. Mission/goals/purpose
            b. Organizational structure
            c. Program examples
      2. American Association of Retired Persons (AARP)
            a. Mission/goals/purpose
            b. Organizational structure
            c. Program examples

III. Where to find information
  A. Local schools
      1. State departments of education school directories
      2. Library reference books on public school listed by state
      3. Use phone book listings by town or in government pages to contact   school district administrations
      4. Superintendent's office can provide overview information on the school district school names, addresses, principals, organization, goals, map - ask for information.
      5. Parent Information Center often has useful information to send out or be picked up
      6. Curriculum specialist is often a good contact to start with - can help identify specific teachers/programs by name and school district-wide.
      7. Department chairperson by subject or gifted and talented program coordinator can also be helpful first contacts
      8. Other district-level/individual school contacts
            a. School site coordinators
            b. Staff meetings
            c. Focus committees active in districts
            d. District mail, school newsletters/bulletins
            e. Parent-Teacher Organizations
            f. Teacher's Union Organization
      9. Educational resource fairs/conferences
    10. Professional journals, magazines

  B. Local community groups
      1. Often they come to you- check guest registers, group reservation logs
      2. Local town directories of organizations
      3. Telephone directory
      4. Local Chamber of Commerce

5. Public Library Bulletin Boards, Information Center
6. Local school contacts
7. Local newspaper listings, events reported
8. Organization web site listings
9. Request current brochure/program /registration material/information from group
10. Purchase Handbook/badge program information

IV. Involving teachers/group leaders in program development
  A. Workshops
    1. Define objectives, goals
    2.Three Types
        a. Program-specific
        b. Informational
        d.   Subject matter-specific (specific to park resources, themes, issues)

  B. Treat teachers /group leaders as professionals
    1. Define objectives, goals
    2. Provide agenda
    3. Offer stipend when you ask for time and expertise
    4. Value their time: respect their schedules/anticipate needs when scheduling
    5. Present activities/ideas you will use feedback on (Don't present only a finished product)
    6. Start and end on time
    7. Feed them
    8. Provide opportunity for them to socialize with each other
    9. Give them something to take back to school
    10. Thank them and follow up

  C. Other avenues for teacher/group leader involvement
    1. Attend district/committee/town meetings
      a. Gather information
      b. Run ideas, program outlines/objectives before group
      c. Get feedback
    2. Investigate participating in teacher in-service meetings
    3. Ask teachers to evaluate current programs

RESOURCES:
School Directories, Educational Publications

Books
Voris, Helen H., Maija Sedzielarz, and Carolyn P. Blackmon. *Teach the Mind, Touch the Spirit, A Guide to Focused Field Trips*. Chicago: Field Museum of Natural History, 1986.

Articles

Gennaro, Eugene, Shirley ann Stoneberg, and Sandy Tanck. "Chance or the Prepared Mind." *Roundtable Reports*, 7(4):16-18, 1982.

Gottfried, Jeffry. "Do Children Learn on School Field Trips?" *Curator*, 23(3):165-174, 1980.

Mitsakos, Charles L. "An Educator," in "As Others See Us." *Museum News*, May/June, pp. 22-23, 1982.
National Park Service. *Programming for School Groups: An Interpreter's Guide*. 1990.
Especially pertinent is chapter "Planning with Teachers."

Video

National Park Service. *Parks as Classrooms*. 28- and 12-minute versions available. 1992.
Videocassette.

Lesson Plans

Backlund, C. and R. Morris, "Working with Educators/Teacher Workshops," *Interpretive Skills Curriculum*, National Park Service, 1986, 1992.

Computer Networks

EE Link, the Environmental Education Server, a project of the National Consortium for environmental Education and Training to support, enhance, and extend effective environmental education for a K–12 audience. http://environlink.org/envirok12.html
Inter-Disciplinary Education Access (IDEA). Accessible via modem or the Internet. An electronic bulletin board that connects educators and rangers. Must set up account first with Elizabeth Hoermann at (508) 970-5021.
Using gopher services on the Internet: A good place to find teachers is K12.chat.teacher.

SUGGESTED DEVELOPMENTAL ACTIVITIES:

1. Using the local library, conduct a search for information identifying the local schools/teachers or community groups appropriate for an identified project/program. What do you want to know? Who is the appropriate audience for your proposed program/project? How do you identify and interest appropriate community groups or school groups in your program/project? How do you identify and interest appropriate community groups or school groups in your program/project? Search the reference section, telephone books, local papers, town meeting notes, curriculum guides, etc. Document the procedure used and create a file of information. Make note of any leads for communications you discover. Create a mailing list.

2. Make telephone calls - organization's home office or local Chamber of Commerce for community groups, parent information center, Superintendent of Schools office, Curriculum Coordinator, Subject Department chairperson, Union office for schools. Ask for information about the community group, school system, or individual school; find out about communications within the school or organization. Carefully read and survey the

information that comes to you in the mail. Make a list of the facts you find about your targeted group/audience to consider in planning your project/program/workshop.

3. Look at college catalog courses of study for teacher certification and graduate level course offerings for teacher continuing education and certification maintenance. Call the State Office of Education to find out about teacher certification requirements. What do teachers study to prepare for the elementary level vs. secondary? If certified, what studies are they required to do - what are they interested in? Survey other area museums and/or parks- what do they offer as teacher workshops/teacher information?

4. Visit a local school or community group meeting. To visit the school, call the principal and ask for an appointment or a contact person to help you with a particular project. Perhaps you want to visit the school library- to see what they have on your subject at appropriate grade levels- make an appointment with the librarian ahead of time. To visit a community group, find out how meetings work. If meetings are open to the public, attend. If not open to the public, contact the group leader when you have a specific project to propose and ask to attend. How does your visit inform you about how the school/group functions, what teachers or community group members are interested in, what their needs are, and how can you help or fit in?

5. Choose one educational group that comes to your park (or one you would like to attract). Research the group. For example, call or visit the local office of Boy Scouts or Girl Scouts to order a copy of the scout handbook for the age group that visits your park/site most. Handbooks include valuable information about the group and often outline many activities that could be completed at your park/site. Share this information with other interpreters and brainstorm ways that this information could be used to increase the success of programs.

6. Use Internet/World Wide Web to research educational groups and resources. Share information with coworkers and supervisor at your park. Make follow-up calls or send letters for brochures, information, guidelines, and standards.

7. Observe a teacher workshop or teacher's advisory meeting at your site or another one nearby. Talk to the folks who organized it to ask "how to" advice. Keep notes about how the meeting was organized and conducted. Assess the outcome: how successful was it? What tangible and intangible products or benefits resulted? List ten tips for conducting a successful teacher workshop or advisory meeting.