

State of California Resources Agency Department of Parks and Recreation

# Training for Interpretive Trainers

May 10-14, 2009

Training Syllabus



William Penn Mott Jr. Training Center



# Memorandum

**Date:** April 15, 2009

**To:** Supervisor

**From:** **Department of Parks and Recreation**  
William Penn Mott Jr. Training Center

**Subject:** Employee Attendance at Formal Training  
Training for Interpretive Trainers Group 5

An employee from your office will soon be attending the formal training program described in the attached. Please insure that the employee is fully prepared to attend the session and that the groundwork is laid for the employee's implementation of the training upon returning to work.

You can assist with capturing the full value of the training by taking the following steps:

### Prior to Training

1. Make sure that **specific** employee needs are identified and, if necessary, called immediately to the attention of the Training Coordinator.
2. Review with the employee the reason for the employee's attendance.
3. Review objectives and agenda with the employee.
4. Discuss objectives and performance expected after the training.

### Immediately Following Attendance

1. Discuss what was learned and intended uses of the training.
2. Review the employee's assessment of the training program for its impact at the workplace and review the due date of the Post-Training Evaluation form.
3. Support the employee's use of the training at the work place.

### Prior to Three Months Following Training

1. Employee, after discussion with supervisor, must login to the Employee Training Management System (ETMS) to complete the Post-Training Evaluation form.
2. Supervisor evaluates the effectiveness of the training on the employee's job performance and logs in to the ETMS to complete the Training Effectiveness Assessment form.

Thank you for your assistance in seeing that the full benefit of training is realized.



Tina L. Williams  
Department Training Officer

Attachment  
cc: Participant

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### ***Mission Statement Training Section***

***The mission of the Training Section is to improve organizational and individual performance through consulting, collaboration, training and development.***

### MOTT TRAINING CENTER STAFF

Tina L. Williams..... Department Training Officer  
Pat Bost ..... Office Manager || Joanne Danielson ..... | Academy Coordinator |
Chuck Combs.....	Training Specialist
Dave Galanti .....	Training Specialist
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Eric Marks .....	Program Assistant

## THE MISSION

*of the California Department of Parks and Recreation is to provide for the health, inspiration and education of the people of California by helping to preserve the state's extraordinary biological diversity, protecting its most valued natural and cultural resources, and creating opportunities for high quality outdoor recreation.*



## FORMAL TRAINING GUIDELINES

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Welcome to formal training, an essential component in your career development.

Since 1969, our Department has been providing a continuously changing number of diverse training programs at its main training facility, the William Penn Mott Jr. Training Center, and other locations including Marconi Conference Center and, most recently, the Two Rivers Training Facility in Sacramento. The Department strives to enhance your learning and job performance with formal training of the highest quality.

Our Department's dedication to training is only one aspect of its commitment to you and to the public. This commitment is costly and represents an important investment in you and your career. You and the Department realize a return on that investment by your positive participation in formal training itself and post training follow-through.

The program you will be participating in is described in this training syllabus, which outlines what you can expect from this training and what is expected of you. This syllabus details what you should do before you leave for training; what to do when you arrive; what you will be doing while in training; and, importantly, what you should be able to do when you return to your work site. Specifically:

1. **SYLLABUS:** The syllabus is now accessible on the Employee Training Management System (ETMS). You should print a copy of the syllabus to bring with you to class. Your copy of this syllabus is an important part of your training experience and should be brought with you to training. Read it before you arrive and review it following the program along with material you received at training.
2. **PRE-TRAINING ASSIGNMENTS:** Your completion of pre-training assignments is essential to the success of your training. You are responsible for all reading assignments in preparation for classroom sessions. Time will be provided during working hours to accomplish any assignments which involve either individual or group efforts and resources. (Pre-training assignments are listed in the "Training Attendance Requirements" section.)

3. TRAVEL: Arrange your travel to and from the training through your District or Office. (No reimbursement for travel expense - including per diem costs - will be approved for travel not specifically authorized in advance by the District Superintendent.) Individuals may claim reimbursement for incidental expenses incurred as outlined in DAM 0410.6. The Training Center does not have the capability to provide transportation to/from Monterey Airport.

The cost of your travel (air fair, mileage, rental car, etc.) is paid by your District or Office **to** and **from** the location of the training.

4. HOUSING: Housing will be assigned to you on a shared-room basis and will be available from 3 p.m. on the date of arrival to 12 noon on the date of departure. The Department provides your room and board expenses at the Training Center only. No per diem allowance will be authorized for living off-grounds. This does not preclude living off-grounds at your own expense. Please advise the Department Training Officer no later than one week before your scheduled arrival if you plan to live off-grounds. No animals are permitted in Asilomar housing. In the event of an emergency, staff must know your room assignment, therefore, you may not switch rooms without staff approval. Overnight guests are not allowed in the buildings unless registered beforehand at the front desk in Asilomar's Administration Building. Quiet hour for lodge living areas is 10 p.m.
5. **HOUSING CANCELLATION POLICY:** If you do not need lodging or must change or cancel your reservation, you must contact the Training Center at least 72 hours prior to your date of arrival. Lodging, registration and associated fees will be charged to the employee's District or Office if a training cancellation is received with less than 72 hours notice.

**The Training Center is committed to ensuring that the reservation that has been made for you is accurate and needed.**

6. OFF-GROUNDS ACCOMMODATIONS: When authorized to stay off-grounds by the Department Training Officer, the Training Center will pickup the cost of your room and meals at the current DPR Asilomar rate. If you stay off grounds and have meals on grounds, the Training Center will authorize only what the Department pays Asilomar for lodging.
7. MEALS: Meals will be provided, semi-cafeteria style, from dinner on the date of arrival through lunch on the date of departure. Meals will be served at 7:15 a.m. for breakfast, 12 noon for lunch, and 6 p.m. for dinner. Hot or box lunches may be provided on some days. If you require a special diet, notify the Asilomar Chef at 831-372-8016 no later than one week before your scheduled arrival.
8. CLOTHING: Field uniforms as found in "Description of Required Field Uniforms", DOM Chapter 2300, Uniform Handbooks, not including optional items, will be worn daily by all uniformed employees during formal training sessions **unless specified**

**in the Program Attendance Checklist.** Non-uniformed employees shall wear professional business attire.

Because we are on the conference grounds with many other groups, and the image we project as State Park employees is important not only during working hours but off duty hours as well, your informal sportswear should be appropriate.

9. ROOM SAFES: Two safes have been installed in each of the lodge rooms used by the Training Center (Live Oak, Tree Tops, and Deer Lodge). These safes are a type that allows the user to input their own combination of numbers to facilitate opening and closing. The Training Center has a master key for emergency entry. Safes are to be left in the open position when checking out of your room.
10. WEAPONS: Weapons are permitted in rooms under the following conditions. Authorized firearms and magazines stored while at the Training Center shall be in a safe condition and stored in one of the following locations: your room safe in Live Oak, Tree Tops, or Deer Lodge, one of the Training Center's safes in the Whitehead Room or secured in your vehicle.
- 11 ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES: Participants shall not possess or consume alcoholic beverages in common areas (living room) while on the Asilomar Conference Grounds unless provided and hosted by Concessionaire Delaware North.
12. SMOKING: Smoking is not permitted in the Training Center or in any lodge or guest room on the Asilomar Conference Grounds.
13. TRAINING CENTER: The Training Center is located on Asilomar Conference Grounds, part of Asilomar State Beach. The Conference Grounds are operated for our Department by a concessionaire, and all lodging and food services are provided to us by employees of the concessionaire. Constant efforts are made to maintain a sound, harmonious working relationship between the Department and concessionaire. None of us can expect preferential treatment for any reason and, as a departmental employee, you will be expected to join in our continuing effort toward an effective relationship with each Asilomar concession staff member. On occasion, non-departmental groups may be staying in the same lodges. It is imperative that you represent the Department well on and off duty.
14. REGISTRATION: When you arrive at Asilomar Conference Grounds, go directly to the front desk at the Asilomar Administration Building for your room key and dining room ticket. If you require vegetarian meals, notify the front desk representative and your meal ticket will be marked accordingly.
15. COURSE LEADERS: The formal training you will attend is developed and, for the most part, conducted by experienced State Park employees in field and staff positions. Some courses will be conducted by qualified instructors from other agencies and educational institutions. Your course leaders have proven their

ability and knowledge in their profession, and provide a level of expertise difficult to match.

16. **TRAINING CENTER STAFF:** A Training Center staff member has been assigned responsibility for your training group as well as for your training program. That staff member usually serves as a Course Leader as well as a Coordinator. During the program, you may be asked to assist Training Center staff in the logistics of your training program (organizing field trip transportation, supervising classroom breaks, etc.). Center staff will do all within their power to make your training experience pleasant and meaningful.
17. **TRAINING MATERIALS:** May be made available to you at both your unit and the Training Center. Handout materials issued at your unit should be brought to training for possible use. A conference binder or notebook will be issued to you at the training session for note taking and convenience in handling materials. Copies of DAM and DOM will be available to you for self-study. Bring your own pens and pencils.
18. **ATTENDANCE:** Regular attendance is a critical course requirement and your participation is important to the success of this training. All absences, except those of an emergency nature, must be approved in advance by the Training Specialist.
19. **COLLEGE CREDIT:** Most training programs are accredited by Monterey Peninsula College for lower division credit. If you successfully complete an accredited program, you will receive either a letter grade or a credit/no-credit designation.
20. **MPC STUDENT ID:** **If you have filled out an MPC application before, you have already been issued a student ID number to use in lieu of your SSN on future applications. You can obtain your MPC ID number by going to their secure website and providing your SSN number (no name required) and birthdate.**

<https://autobahn.mpc.edu/scripts/autobahn.exe/Execute?Application=WebReq&Program=REPORT-SR-FIND-SSN>

**Newcomers to training will still need to provide their SSN on the first MPC application only, after which a student ID number will be assigned and available at the web address above within a few weeks of the program's conclusion. You can store your MPC ID numbers in your ETMS Profile for future reference.**

21. **VEHICLES:** All vehicles should be parked in the lots adjacent to the Training Center. Any questions regarding use of a State vehicle while at the Training Center should be discussed with your supervisor prior to your departure for training, or with your Program Coordinator while at the Training Center.

22. BICYCLES: If you bring your bicycle, store it in the bicycle shed next to the Training Center. Bicycles may not be brought into any building nor chained to lamp posts, trees, etc. The Training Center has a limited number of bicycles available for your use. Prior to your use, you are required to complete a safety inspection and sign a waiver which is posted in the bicycle shed.
23. MAIL: Mail forwarded to you during your time at the Center should be addressed to you in care of:

Department of Parks and Recreation  
WILLIAM PENN MOTT JR. TRAINING CENTER  
P. O. Box 699, Pacific Grove, CA 93950
24. CELL PHONES: As a courtesy to your fellow participants and course leaders ensure that your cell phone is turned off during classes. Participants should not be receiving or making cell phone calls during class time. Please limit those calls to your breaks.
25. FAX: The Training Center's FAX number is (831) 649-2824.
26. TELEPHONE: Limit phone calls during classroom hours to urgent business or emergencies. Anyone wishing to contact you by telephone during working hours should call the Center at (831) 649-2954. Calls after 5 p.m. or during weekends should be made to (831) 372-8016, Asilomar Conference Grounds, and the caller should tell the switchboard operator you are with a Department of Parks and Recreations training group. **Please Note: There are no longer pay telephones outside of the Training Center. There are pay telephones located at the Asilomar Administration Building.**
27. LAUNDRY AND DRY CLEANING: May be taken care of by you at one of several local establishments.
28. RECREATION: Facilities available on grounds include a heated swimming pool, ping-pong and pool tables, and a volleyball court. The Monterey area offers horseback riding, golf, tennis, racquetball, deep sea fishing, and many historical landmarks and scenic sights to explore.
29. POST-TRAINING ASSIGNMENTS: In connection with formal training are to be completed under the direction of your supervisor. See "Program Attendance Requirements" in this syllabus.
30. COFFEE BREAK REFRESHMENTS: Will be available throughout each session at the Center. You will be asked to contribute to the "Hospitality Fund" to defray expenses. Please bring your own coffee cup.



## PROGRAM ATTENDANCE CHECKLIST

To assist you in your preparation for formal training session at the William Penn Mott Jr. Training Center, the following list is provided:

\_\_\_\_\_1. Read and understand the program syllabus prior to your arrival at the Training Center.

\_\_\_\_\_2. Complete the following pre-training assignments:

- Review the Post-Training Assignment page in the syllabus with your supervisor
- Read the included articles written by Dr. Sam Ham.

Chapter 1 Prologue--Endgame of Interpretation (April 23, 2006)  
**Please read this one first and to be prepared to discuss its implications for training interpreters where they work.**

Enhancing Visitor Experiences and Making a Difference in the World (Keynote NAI R-9 March 7, 2008) **Please read this one second and to be prepared to discuss the origins behind the TORE model.**

From Interpretation to Protection – Is There a Theoretical Basis? (AHI Journal 2007) **Please read this one last. Was Tilden naive or brilliant? Why?**

- Review the Pre-Training Assignments.

\_\_\_\_\_3. Arrange your travel through your Unit/Office.

\_\_\_\_\_4. Remember to bring the following with you to training:

- Program syllabus.
- Proper field uniform (Review DOM 2300 and Formal Training Guideline #8). Note: Shorts and short pants are not appropriate uniform attire.
- Coffee cup, alarm clock, pens, and pencils.

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CHAPTER 1

Prologue—The Endgame of Interpretation

*A man sits in his workshop, busy with an invention of wheels and springs. You ask him what the gadget is, what it is meant to do. He looks at you confidently and whispers: "I really don't know."*

*Another man rushes down the street, panting for breath. You intercept him and ask where he is going. He gasps: "How should I know where I'm going? I am on my way."*

*Your reaction—and ours, and the world's—is that these two men are a little mad. Every sensible invention must have a purpose, every planned sprint a destination.*

Lajos Egri (1946: 1), *The Art of Dramatic Writing*

We all know that life is full of uncertainty, but two things we can be fairly sure of are that the second guy is still running and the invention remains a work in progress. Without an end in sight, neither can achieve a result, at least not a purposeful one. So it is with interpretation.

This first chapter considers the outcomes of interpretation, what results we might be after, what we're trying to achieve in the end, and what we would need to know at a minimum to say whether we're successful at it. I'll call this the "endgame," a term chess players use in the final stages of a match when the position of all the pieces makes the outcome certain.<sup>1</sup> In more common usage, it refers to the status or condition of things at the end of some process or event. Like the inventor and sprinter in Egri's example, we need to be able to envision the endgame of interpretation in order to give it a *purpose* and a *destination*. Once we're clear on what we're after, our decisions about content, communication approach, and how to evaluate it also become clearer. Likewise, when we've defined the endgame, we'll see implications for how to educate, train and develop interpretation professionals to continually improve their effectiveness. For these reasons, this book necessarily begins with the *end*.

### Some Possible Endgames of Interpretation

Having worked with a lot of interpreters<sup>2</sup> around the world, I've noticed some patterns in how they see their craft. Particularly interesting to me has been listening to the ideas out there about what constitutes "good" or "effective" or "successful" interpretation. The indicators of success an interpreter emphasizes over others reveal something about her or his philosophy and approach—that

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<sup>1</sup> "Endgame" became a popular word in 1958 with the publication of Samuel Beckett's play, *Endgame*.

<sup>2</sup> I use "interpreter" to refer to anyone who does *any* kind of interpretive work through *any* communication medium (face-to-face or non-personal). Among these are writers, designers and artists, as well as employees or volunteers for parks, zoos, museums, historic sites, tour operators, cruise ship companies, science centers, gardens, forests, aquaria, wineries, breweries, theme parks, and manufacturing plants, as well as guides, expedition leaders, docents, storytellers, composers, dramatists, directors, actors, and performers of all kinds.

person's sense of purpose and destination. A typical discussion begins with the interpreter either raving or complaining about the quality of interpretation that she, he or some other person has produced. After listening to the evaluation, I almost always respond with the same question: "Why do you say that?" The conversation that ensues is invariably revealing in terms of the endgame my friend has perhaps consciously (though often, unwittingly) adopted. Whenever we're forced to explain to someone else the reasons behind our assessment of something as being "good" or "bad," we must come to grips with the criteria we've applied in arriving at that conclusion. That's where the endgame is revealed. In Figure 1.1, I've listed some of the reasons given to me at one time or another to explain why interpretation was "good."

As the willing participant in many dozens, if not hundreds, of such exchanges over the years, I've noticed three prevalent endgames. These are not necessarily the only endgames, nor are they necessarily mutually exclusive (in fact, hybrids are common). But as we'll see in Chapter 2, they differ enough in the criteria we'd apply in distinguishing between excellent and poor interpretation—or between interpretation that succeeds and that which fails—that they represent fundamentally different points of view, or *paradigms*, about interpretation's endgame. Our sense of how to design interpretive encounters<sup>3</sup> to be "effective," and how to train interpreters to be "excellent" at their craft, will vary depending upon which of these paradigms we adopt. The ones I see most often are championed by three archetypes—the provoker, the teacher and the entertainer.<sup>4</sup> Maybe you can see some of these archetypes reflected in the list in Figure 1.1.

*Why do you say that?*

- "It was amazing. She held their attention for 45 minutes!"**
- "They could feel their own heritage!"**
- "Afterwards, everyone could identify every bird."**
- "Everyone in that audience saw the connection."**
- "They were laughing like crazy through the whole program."**
- "His body language was the key to whole thing."**
- "People actually wanted to have their picture taken with me afterwards."**
- "When I got to his campsite the next day, he invited me to eat with them."**
- "They actually offered me a beer!"**
- "You could see their wheels spinning. He really had them captivated."**
- "Those people left so moved they probably didn't even sleep that night."**
- "I've never had a more motivated audience. It was like they were just eating out of my hand."**
- "That was a great way to show how stratification works."**
- "I'd have to say that this was my most memorable experience as an interpreter. They seemed to respond to everything I said."**
- "It was creative. The visitors really enjoyed themselves."**
- "If you wanted to illustrate how evolution works, you couldn't find a better analogy."**

**Figure 1.1. Interpreters' explanations of why an interpretive encounter was successful.**

<sup>3</sup> I'll use the phrase "interpretive encounter" to refer both to personal (face-to-face) and non-personal (self-guided) interpretation in order to avoid continually repeating the clarification.

<sup>4</sup> Other far less common archetypes are "interpreters-as-cops" (which is self-explanatory), "interpreters-as-reproachers" (who blame and shame their audiences for how they think or behave), "interpreters-as-preachers" (who impose their own spirituality on their audiences), and "interpreters-as-encyclopedists" (a special breed of "interpreters-as-teachers" who focus not just on important facts, but on *all* facts).

## Interpretation as Provocation

Defining the endgame of interpretation seems to have been Freeman Tilden's purpose in his fifth chapter of *Interpreting Our Heritage* (1957). He was emphatic that we mustn't see interpretation as some sort of "instructional" or "teaching" exercise in the academic sense. Borrowing from Ralph Waldo Emerson, he gave us a now famous dichotomy, "not instruction, but provocation," as a basic framework to show what interpretation is and is not (1957: 32-33, 36):

It is true that the visitors...frequently desire straight information, which may be called instruction, and a good interpreter will always be able to teach when called upon. But the purpose of Interpretation is to stimulate the reader or hearer toward a desire to widen his [sic] horizon of interests and knowledge, and to gain an understanding of the greater truths that lie behind any statements of fact...to search out meanings for himself.

In this way, Tilden was telling us that the main thing interpretation should aim to accomplish is provoking visitors to think for themselves, and in doing so, to find their own personal meanings and connections. Furthermore, he cautioned against seeing interpretation as serving some sort of academic teaching function. Readers familiar with Tilden's philosophy will know that his formula for "success" hinged on two "Rs," relevance and revelation. The best (most successful) interpretation, as he envisioned it, would connect to what people care most about (themselves and their own experience in life) and it would be presented in such a way that the thing being interpreted would "reveal" its inner meanings (or "greater truths") to the people—that is, they, themselves, would find their own personal meanings in the thing. Two generations later, I think this is still pretty good advice. The archetype interpreter in this endgame could be called the *provoker*.

## Interpretation as Teaching

However, Tilden observed then, as we do now, that interpreters sometimes can lose sight of the provocation endgame, a danger (or temptation) that appears to grow in proportion to their own knowledge about the things they interpret. When this happens, they run the danger of becoming more like unskilled teachers, where the facts, rather than the potential meanings the visitors might themselves make from those facts, become the centerpiece of their focus. Tilden recounted his own experience as a member of the audience (1957: 36):

Thus, in so many cases that we have observed, the provocation to the visitor to search out meanings for himself, and join in the expedition like a fellow discoverer, was sometimes submerged in a high tide of facts, perfectly accurate, perfectly ineffectual....And as a participant in such groups I have so many times had my enthusiasm wilted by an interlocutor who mistook information for interpretation—who became a poor instructor when he could have been an inspiring guide.

We probably have to forgive interpreters who succumb to a desire to tell everything they know (the "encyclopedists"), since in a lot of cases their weakness stems directly from an admirable and necessary source—their own passion. And, of course, it's impossible to interpret anything without facts, maybe even lots of them. But despite their good intentions, when getting those facts across becomes the primary focus of an encounter, interpretation takes on a teaching-like quality. In this

endgame, “success” is visitors learning, recognizing, or being able to remember the facts presented during an interpretive encounter. Here the archetype might be labeled the *teacher*.

### Interpretation as Entertainment

A third prevalent endgame emanates from the correct observation that most visitors are pleasure seekers who wish to be entertained. “Success” in this endgame is making each interpretive encounter enjoyable, and holding audience attention. Toward this end, we design and deliver interpretive encounters that emphasize the “wow factor”—superlatives, unusual, extraordinary facts, dynamic presentation styles, and novel media—a sort of information carnival, if such a thing exists, in which interpretation becomes an *ad hoc* collection of “cool facts” and interesting linkages presented in a clever way. Seeing interpretation through this endgame, we gauge its effectiveness mainly by whether our audiences *enjoy* it and whether we’re able to keep them *entertained* for an allotted time (see Figure 1.2).

#### What Does it Mean to “Entertain” and to “Enjoy?”

In this book, I’ll always use the literal meaning of “entertain,” which is “to hold attention.” Its etymology is old French (*entre*, between + *tenir*, to hold) and Latin (*inter*, among + *tenere*, to hold). In its literal meaning, “entertain” doesn’t necessarily imply “amusement” or “fun.” Obviously, sad or psychologically disturbing ideas and bodily painful events hold our attention too. In fact, they *captivate* us, and anything that holds our attention that strongly is, by definition, entertaining. Likewise, “entertain” can mean to contemplate, consider, or hold in mind. So, for example, in daily conversation we might say, “Let’s entertain the possibility of...such and such” or “Would you entertain a slightly different point of view?” These are the meanings I intend when I use the word “entertain”—literally, to place something strongly in the mind of another. It’s true that some kinds of entertainment involve “amusement,” “frivolity,” or “playful fun,” but I *never* mean *only* those things when I use the word.

I also use the literal meaning of “enjoy” (from old French *enjoir*, to rejoice), in the sense of deriving satisfaction or pleasure, as we do, for example, when something captivates us. Much research documents the enjoyment we receive from focused thought. Clearly, humans can “enjoy” being captivated, even when it’s not very “amusing” or “fun” in the normal ways we think of these words (for example, while reading about a tragic event or watching a scary movie). Assuming that most interpreters don’t intend to inflict bodily or damaging psychological pain on their pleasure-seeking audiences, you can think of entertainment and enjoyment as essentially the same thing—that is, being “entertained” means having a “good time.” We *like* being captivated.

**Figure 1.2. Definitions of entertaining and enjoyable.**

Appropriately, Larsen (2002, 2003) labeled this kind of interpretation “interpretainment.” Its older siblings, “infotainment” and “edutainment,”<sup>5</sup> respectively refer either to entertainment that’s intended

<sup>5</sup> “Infotainment” (information + entertainment) was originally used in television journalism to mean “soft news” (a mixture of news and entertainment features). “Edutainment” (education + entertainment) is more popular in the world of computer

to be informative and educational, or education that's supposed to be entertaining. Either way, the "tainment" in each of them signals the defining quality of their endgame: holding attention.

The first and necessary task of *every* interpretive encounter is to capture and maintain the audience's attention; and until we have it, we're truly wasting our time trying to do anything more. There are probably hundreds of ways to do this, some of which we'll discuss in later chapters, but the success of any one of them depends on matching our method with the audience's notion of "enjoyment" (what to them is appealing, interesting, attractive, etc.). Since audiences can vary enormously in what they enjoy, we have to know something about them in order to entertain them, whether in face-to-face or non-personal interpretation. When we guess wrong, it's doubtful we'll be successful in achieving much else. Recognizing this, some interpreters focus most, or even all, of their attention on the entertainment value of their interpretation. These are the archetypes of this endgame—let's call them the *entertainers*.

An inherent risk of the entertainer's endgame is that the entertainment itself can sometimes steal the show, and whatever other outcome the interpreter had in mind is lost in the bells and whistles of the performance. As the Canadian philosopher, Marshall McLuhan, warned during the 1960s' humanities revolution, the medium, itself, can become the message an audience takes away.<sup>6</sup> This is, for example, what occurred to travel writer Bill Bryson (2000:166), while watching an interpretive performance, *Ned Kelly's Last Stand*, which chronicled the demise of a famous Australian bad guy (Figure 1.3).

#### **"Interpretainment" Gone Awry**

*We bought tickets and shuffled through a door into a dim room where the spectacle was to begin... Before us, in a deep gloom, we could just make out the shapes of furniture and seated dummies. After a few minutes, the lights dimmed altogether, there was a sudden very loud bang of gunfire, and the performance began. Well, call me a Whimp, drop a brick shithouse on me, but I can honestly say that I have never seen anything so wonderfully, so delightfully, so monumentally bad as "Ned Kelly's Last Stand." It was so bad it was worth every penny. Actually, it was so bad it was worth more than we paid. For the next thirty five minutes we proceeded through a series of rooms where we watched homemade dummies, each with a frozen smile and a mop of hair that brought to mind windblown pubis, reenacting various scenes from the famous Kelly shoot-out in a random and deliriously incoherent way. Occasionally one of the dummies would turn a stiff head or jerk up a forearm to fire a pistol, though not necessarily in synch with the narrative. Meanwhile, around each room lots of other mechanical events were taking place--empty chairs rocked, cupboard doors mysteriously opened and shut, player pianos played... Do you know those fairground stalls where you fire a rifle at assorted targets to make an outhouse door swing open or a stuffed chicken fall over? Well, this reminded me of that, only much worse.*

Bill Bryson

**Figure 1.3.** Excerpt from Bill Bryson's reaction to *Ned Kelly's Last Stand*. Source: Bryson (2000). *In a Sunburned Country*. New York: Broadway Books, 166.

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games, science centers, and theme parks. It often implies the use of high-tech media or gadgetry (<http://www.thefreedictionary.com>).

<sup>6</sup> See McLuhan (1967).

As we all know, most audiences are eager to reward clever and creative communication styles with their attention and applause, and to the well-intentioned “interpretainer,” this feedback is irresistible and motivating. So it’s not surprising that evaluations of interpretation have often stressed audience attention and enjoyment as the primary indicators of success. In this way, audiences, interpreters and evaluators, all alike, have joined forces in validating the infotainment endgame, and a view of interpretation as fact-based entertainment persists today. But while any interpretation must succeed in holding the attention of the audience we want to impact, when attention holding becomes our only prominent concern, the line of distinction between interpretation and sheer entertainment is pretty hard to find.

### Setting the Stage for a Critical Look at Thematic Interpretation’s Endgame

We’ve seen that three prevalent archetypes (the provoker, the teacher and the entertainer) represent very different views about interpretation’s purpose and destination. Although I’ve stressed that they’re not necessarily mutually exclusive, in presenting them separately I’ve accentuated their individual qualities and differences, as if they were separate and distinct windows through which the endgame of interpretation can be viewed. And a lot of us have indeed known interpreters, or have seen interpretation, that falls exclusively in one or another of these categories. In reality, however, probably not one of the archetypes alone represents an endgame that’s both achievable and of interest to most interpreters. The would-be provoker who lacks the knowledge to make connections between a place and his audience will come across as a shallow naive; the teacher short on showmanship will bore; and the entertainer who fails to see beyond the show will leave audiences laughing, but clueless about what it all might mean to them.

Common sense should tell us that, to some degree, these three endgames are not only compatible, they’re necessary partners. The ideal interpreter would probably embody aspects of all three—a skilled communicator, armed with knowledge, who knows how to get between other people’s ears and provoke them to think on their own. Provocation, as we’ll see shortly, is a fundamental goal of virtually all interpretation, but we can’t succeed in provoking an audience to think without a factual foundation of some kind, and if we fail to capture and hold the audience’s attention, we’ll just be talking to ourselves. So each of the three endgames has its virtues.

My purpose for contrasting them here is simply to illustrate what I said at the beginning of this prologue: we need to be able to envision the endgame of interpretation in order to give it a *purpose* and a *destination*. Until we’re clear on what we’re trying to achieve, having a view of “excellence” in interpretation—seeing how to evaluate it and how to get there—isn’t even possible. With some trepidation, I’ve attempted in Figure 1.4 to compare the main purposes and some of the evaluative criteria implied by each of the endgames. The point of it is simply to show that there are real differences between and among them, and that each one potentially takes us in a different direction.

We’ve already seen how each endgame brings to mind its own evaluative criteria. The provocation endgame wants to leave people thinking and discovering their own meanings and connections; the teaching endgame strives to leave them knowledgeable, informed about the currently known facts surrounding a phenomenon, place or thing; and the entertainment endgame stresses the *act* of interpretation more than its outcome, where providing enjoyment and holding attention are the main evaluative criteria, in hopes that people will leave satisfied and with a fond memory of time well spent.

Each of them focuses our attention on different kinds of indicators that might tell us how we're doing en route to the endgame of choice. Were we to evaluate the accomplishments of an interpretive encounter according to any one of the endgames, we'd probably be interested in indicators that are unlike those in the other two categories.

While a practicing interpreter may give little thought to the criteria an evaluation might use in judging the success of a given interpretive act, we should be acutely aware that the direction professional interpretation travels in its pursuit of excellence hinges entirely on them. Each evaluation produces results. If the magnitude of results in this or that are used to make judgments about interpretation's achievement (e.g., did people score high or low on the knowledge test, did they or did they not pay attention and rate it as enjoyable, or were they provoked to have many or just a few thoughts?), then those judgments should lead us to make decisions about improving the thing being evaluated. If knowledge gains are low, then shouldn't we devise a strategy to get better knowledge scores next time?; if people didn't pay attention or rate the interpretation as enjoyable, then shouldn't we find ways to make the interpretation more appealing to them?; and if they aren't being provoked to thought, then shouldn't we explore means of achieving that? If the answers are no, then why are we paying attention to those indicators *at all*?

There's another, and probably inevitable, conclusion we can draw from this discussion. Not only does our vision of the endgame lead us to indicators that define "success," but the criteria themselves define "excellence" in interpretation. Depending on the indicators we pay attention to, each sends us down a different path, both in terms of improving interpretation and in educating the next generation of interpretation professionals. For example, if knowledge acquisition is truly the indicator of interest, then we'll certainly want to train interpreters in methods that will produce better learning and knowledge gains. As we'll see in the next chapter, this might well lead us to train them in methods we associate more with classroom teaching than with interpretation. It's well established, for instance, that techniques such as reinforcement, repetition, and fact rehearsal produce superior knowledge test scores, yet are known to kill audience attention paying in interpretive settings.<sup>7</sup> Nevertheless, if better knowledge gain is what we want to produce, then shouldn't we be trying to produce the largest gains possible? And shouldn't we be recruiting and hiring interpreters who already possess such pedagogic skills? If not, then why are we using knowledge-based scores to evaluate interpretation? We could apply this logic, of course, to any criterion of success in any of the three paradigms.

	Primary Endgame		
	Interpreter as <i>teacher</i>	Interpreter as <i>entertainer</i>	Interpreter as <i>provoker</i>
Main purpose	Make people learn and understand established facts	Entertain people and provide a good time	Make people think and find personal meaning
Usual indicators of interest	Correct recall of facts Knowledge recognition	Amount of enjoyment Attention capture & holding power	Number & kinds of thoughts provoked How much & what people had to say about it

**Figure 1.4. Purposes and typical evaluative criteria of three interpretive endgames.**

<sup>7</sup> See, for example, Bitgood (1988); Falk, Koran, Dierking & Dreblow (1985); Moscardo (1996); and Serrell (1977).



You may be thinking that the endgames really aren't that different, and that if you can be successful in one then you can assume success in the others as well—for example that if you hold people's attention long enough they'll be provoked to think and will remember facts later, or if you succeeded in provoking them to a lot of thought that they'd also do well on a test of knowledge about the main points you were trying to make. As tempting as these assumptions might be, we'll see in Chapter 2 that there's little evidence to back them up. Although you've certainly got to attract and hold your audience's attention to achieve success in either of the other two endgames, holding attention doesn't guarantee that anything more will result. Similarly, a lot of research shows that provoking people to thought doesn't necessarily mean they'll be able to remember much about the main ideas you presented. And on the flip side, even if visitors are able to remember or recognize a lot of the facts you presented, it doesn't mean you provoked them to think about anything beyond those facts. You have to decide for yourself which of the endgames you believe in most if you're going to improve interpretation and achieve excellence over the long haul. That much seems fairly clear.

So even though none of the three endgames precludes the others, they are, in fact, choices when it comes to our notion of success, what we evaluate, and how we educate and train interpreters to be capable of producing excellent numbers. Each gives us a set of eyeglasses through which we can see interpretation's purpose and ultimate destination. They're *paradigms* that determine what we selectively pay attention to, what outcomes matter, and what it will take to realize them. Returning to the beginning of this chapter, if the sprinter and inventor in Egri's story had a sense of their endgames, they'd not only finish what they set out to do, they'd be able to do it even better next time.

With this brief background about the three broad endgames of provocation, teaching and entertainment, my purpose in the next chapter is to analyze a bit more the implications of each of them in relation to a larger set of considerations. As we'll see, many of these considerations relate to interpretation's role in creating an ethic of caring—or stewardship—about special places and objects, and some relate to the pathways through which we might facilitate such an ethic. In these considerations we'll find both the premise and promise of a *thematic* approach to interpretation.

## **Enhancing Visitor Experiences and Making a Difference in the World**

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March 7, 2008  
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## Enhancing Visitor Experiences and Making a Difference in the World

I've had the great fortune to work with interpreters in many countries of the world. Everywhere I go, the people I'm working with are always a little different. They dress differently; they speak different languages, eat different foods, listen to different kinds of music, watch different kinds of television and laugh at different kinds of humor. But when you sit down and talk with these people about really matters in life — you know, things that connect to those three or four or sometimes five key values that we raise our children by, vote by, shop by, and which govern in one way or another dozens of other decisions we make everyday, you find out just how much alike we really are, despite other comparatively superficial differences between us. In a group like the one we comprise here tonight, you'll almost certainly find a shared belief that interpreting for the people who visit our places of work is more than just giving entertaining facts to pleasure seekers. On the contrary, we believe that by mucking around intelligently in the experiences of these people we can make some kind of difference in the world. And our literature and philosophical foundations tell us that if we can contribute to visitors' experiences in just the right ways, they in turn can become some kind of collective force for *good* and *goodwill* in our world.

That is, we can make a difference *through* the people we ourselves reach.

This evening, I want to talk with you a little about the *nature* of experience, and specifically, the experience of the visitors you encounter in your everyday work. Whether you're on the profit side or non-profit side of the travel and tourism industry, I want to appeal if I can to whatever beliefs you have about making these kinds of differences, as a person and as an organization or business.

It's common today to hear travel operators and destination managers all across the world stress the educational value of the experiences they offer. Just do an internet search using three keywords (education, tourism and travel) and you'll see what I mean. Google returns 407,000 hits and Yahoo gives you a whopping 16.8 million! The educational value of tourism and travel has created a huge world market, and visitors today are more likely than ever before to arrive with the expectation that they will, in fact, learn about the places they visit. For increasing numbers of them, learning is a central part of what constitutes a "quality experience." That is, if to some extent a trip to your place of work *didn't* engage them in learning, they probably wouldn't value the experience a lot. That will stand to reason for lot of us in this room.

But I believe there's potentially more to educational travel than providing quality experiences that are simply, well, "educational." Educational to what end? Well certainly, the self-enrichment and intellectual stimulation of the visitor is a self-justifying end. But personally and professionally, I believe the connection making and understanding that result from these quality experiences can be channeled to even higher purposes. And, as someone who's spent his professional life trying to understand the psychology of how this might occur, I can tell you with some confidence that these higher purposes are reachable, and the differences I'm going to talk about this evening are achievable, even if they're difficult to observe.

I say they're difficult to observe because they lie for the most part unseen in the minds of the visitors themselves, in their thoughts and their feelings. Yet, if we're very strategic in how we do our jobs, we can increase the likelihood of seeing with our own eyes an observable difference in how those people actually behave, what they do and don't do. So when I talk about making some kind of "difference," these are the kinds of differences I'm most referring to.

Just look at the weighty issues the world is facing today. Our planet is warming, deserts advance while glaciers retreat — indeed, many of us in this room will be around to hear the sad news that the last known polar bear in the wild has died. We're losing species and the genetic wisdom they contain at an unprecedented rate, we're kissing goodbye forever to whole human cultures that are vanishing from the face of the Earth, we're depleting our oceans, contaminating our lakes, rivers, drinking water, and the air we breathe. Whew!

I can't even express how gravely serious each of these problems is! And it's going to take the combined effort of a broad cross-section of society to do anything about them. Our profession is one, and some would argue, an important, focal point for such an effort simply because people like us care so much and can reach so many other people. And if we could better envision the pathways through which we could make a positive difference in the world, I have no doubt that just about each and every one of us would do it.

For many of us, the difference we can make starts with the protection of the very places we work, or with the conservation of the kinds of things we interpret there. And we feel that if we can do that effectively then we can send our visitors home with a mindset and the motivation to make an even bigger difference elsewhere.

Indeed, one of the things that defines both the premise and promise of interpretation is our belief that it's our *visitors* who represent our best hope of making some kind of difference. I don't think anyone has ever said this more eloquently than my good friend, Sven Lindblad, who owns Lindblad Expeditions in New York. Sven runs his business according to the guiding philosophy that:

Ultimately, it will be the insistence and passion of the traveler that will save the special places on earth.

The difference I'm talking about today is the one *you*, as an interpreter or educational travel operator can make in how visitors think, feel, and given the opportunity, possibly behave with respect to the things you interpret for them. These people represent an army of potential spokespersons, defenders and constituents of a sane and healthy planet. And sufficiently moved by their experiences in any given place, each of them is capable of acting in *behalf* of, or even in *defense* of, that place, whether it's while they're there or long after they return home.

And that's what my presentation is ultimately about tonight — enhancing visitor experiences as a means of making a positive difference in the world.

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Here are a couple of real-world scenarios to consider:

A guest on a Lindblad expedition in Antarctica is so blown away by what he sees that he returns home to Seattle and donates \$2 million to the University of Washington to further penguin education and research. What happened? Is this guy just an impulsive flake, or did something important occur to him?

Australians will tell you point blank that they are *not* philanthropic the way North Americans and Brits are. Yet in 2005 the Aussies were beside themselves with national pride because their private citizens gave more to Tsunami Relief in Thailand than the Australian government gave. Why would a whole nation of self-described non-givers do that? Is it irrational?

A 9-year old kid from Colorado visits a wildlife park in Tasmania and gets so upset about the facial cancer threatening Tasmanian Devils that he donates his life savings (about \$13,000) to the park. This started what has become a major fund for the support of devil research. What would lead a kid to part with a fortune like that?

**The question that interests me is: What's going on in all of these examples? How do you explain these behaviors?**

It's purely coincidental that the examples I've given all involve somebody giving money, since that's really not the important thing they have in common. I could cite other examples where people have lent their knowledge and time to conservation projects or biological research (in fact, volunteer tourism is on the rise around the world) and others who've given their goodwill and willingness to behave in certain ways in sensitive cultural or natural settings.

But it's not what these people *did* that makes them noteworthy. It's what led them to do it at all. The scenarios all involve people who had an experience that moved them...

...an experience that produced some kind of empathy or caring and provoked them to *think* long and hard.

The Seattleite, blown away by the Emperor Penguins' decidedly harsh lifestyle, developed a deep respect for what it's taken this animal to survive in such an inhospitable place. If *any* animal deserves to thrive, it's the Emperor Penguin.

The Aussies were shaken by the graphic post-Tsunami imagery from Thailand coming into their homes, via broadcast and print media, showing incredible human suffering in a part of the world they know well. More so than the citizens of most other countries I've worked in, Australians are well traveled, particularly in Asia and the Pacific. This helps give them a particularly strong empathy with the Thais.

And the Colorado kid empathized with the suffering Devils he saw (which are really a cute little animal despite Warner Brothers' depiction of them in Bugs Bunny cartoons). Seeing firsthand the painful cancerous holes on their faces, learning that the facial tumor disease that is threatening them with extinction has no cure yet, and then hearing an interpreter at the park say

that the research to find the cure was very expensive, he just thought his unsolicited donation was the best and highest use of his \$13.00.

Though each of these experiences is different in context, the participants reacted in essentially the same way in each case. As I'll explain in a little more detail shortly, having a profound experience with something usually makes that something more important to us than it was before. It comes to *matter* to us. And when the opportunity to act in behalf of this important thing presents itself, a statistically likely outcome is that we'll indeed act, as long as we think we're capable and the time and place are right.

Most of us have experienced this sort of thing ourselves many times.

How many of you read a book recently that impacted you a lot? You know, the book you couldn't put down, the one you were sorry to see end. Think about the days and weeks after you finished it.

Did you ask other people if they'd read it? Did you want to talk to other people about the book or tell them about it? Did you recommend the book? If you were surfing TV channels and saw something about it or a related story on one of the channels, did you stop to check it out? And did any of you go out and buy another book by that author?

I'll bet some of you did. That's because you had a profound experience reading the first one. We usually want to talk about and act on our most profound experiences. And we often look for ways to extend these experiences, reinforce them, or repeat them.

Since I keep talking about "*experience*," and because "experience" is the product that many of you sell or offer free-of-charge to your visitors, I suppose I should explain a little more precisely what I mean by that term.

As everyone here knows, visitors of all kinds seek "experiences." Whether the visitor's motive is learning, adventure, escape, improved health, contact with nature and culture, or even sex, the purpose of the trip is to have an experience of one kind or another.

Of course, we do our part by trying to understand the kinds of experiences our visitors want, and then by providing the ingredients necessary for them to have good ones.

But just what constitutes "experience?" While it's convenient to think of it in terms of what visitors do (that is, their activities and how they spend their time), those are just the inputs. Experience is an *output*; it's the *result* of doing activities, but it's not the activities themselves. It's also common to think of experience along a good-bad dimension (that is, whether visitors are satisfied or dissatisfied, happy or disappointed with things). But such judgments are just the visitor's *evaluation* of the experience, not the experience itself.

Experience, as psychologists understand it, is quite simply what goes on in visitors' minds as they go about the act of visiting. It's the sum total of their thoughts and emotions — what they're thinking and how they're feeling—as they engage in the things they do during their

travels. So experience is nothing more than thinking, and the more visitors are provoked to think, the more profound are their experiences. The most profound experience is the one in which we are quite simply *blown away* — that is, when we're provoked to so many thoughts that we feel overwhelmed. Profound experiences, of course, can be positive or negative.

Seeing experience as synonymous with thinking is important because it tells an interpreter something practical:

The main way you can enhance your visitors' experiences is to influence *how much* those people think, what they think *about*, and how they *feel* about it.

And so one way to evaluate the quality or effectiveness of your interpretive products would be to pay attention to how much they provoke your visitors to think, rather than paying attention to how much factual knowledge the visitors acquire or can later remember.

Yes, for many visitors today there's an underlying motive to "learn," but not necessarily in the academic sense of "knowledge gain." If we think of experience as thinking, we might equate "learning" not so much with the factual knowledge people gleaned from their time with us, but rather with the number and kinds of new thoughts they had as a result.

But for now, just imagine that you could follow some of your visitors back to their homes and be a fly on the wall when they get out the photos of their trip and tell a friend or family member about their time with you. Their experience would be audible. You'd literally "hear" their experience in the form of the thoughts they express. Of course (and studies show this), you'd expect that their thoughts would be all over the board, ranging from descriptions of what they did and their evaluations of it, to the all-important connections they made with the place and the things they encountered there. In other words, the meanings they attached to things.

If you pay particular attention to the meanings and connections, what you'll hear will be the main conclusions they drew (accurate or not), impressions they formed (justifiable or not), and the implications they see (rational or not) of what they experienced.

If you think of their experience as a sort of book or novel, you'd hear in your visitors' own words the moral (or more likely, the *morals*) of the story that mattered most to them. These thoughts would tell you a lot about their experience and what it means to them, even if they couldn't remember much about the factual nature of the things they were exposed to (the names of plants, animals, food, buildings, streets, and people, for example).

There's reason to believe that this is the view of experience an interpreter must have in order to make the kinds of differences I'm talking about — at least to make them with any sort of consistency or regularity.

Dozens of psychological studies have shown the same predictable pattern — that if you want to influence how people think about, feel about and act toward something, the first thing you have to do is get them to think about it — and not just casual, momentary thought giving, but *effortful thought*. According to these studies, *provoking people to think is the first and foremost thing you must accomplish if you want to increase your chances of making them care about something you*

*care about* — sort of like what happened to penguin guy, the Australian donors, and the Colorado kid.

And this view of experience shouldn't sound terribly revolutionary to any interpreter. It's nothing more than what a very smart guy named Tilden tried to tell us a half century ago:

*Interpretation is not instruction, but rather provocation*

In 21<sup>st</sup> Century street talk, we'd say that:

*Our job as interpreters isn't about teaching anything to anybody.  
It's simply about blowing them away.*

Research and practical experience show that when visitors are provoked to do a *lot* of thinking, they attach deep meanings to the places they visit — that is, these places become *meaningful*.

Since meaningful places matter to visitors, they're likely to act in ways that support or defend the integrity of a meaningful place if given a reasonable opportunity to do so. In this way, orchestrating and delivering profound experiences is perhaps the main pathway through which an interpreter's work can make a difference in the world. Stronger constituencies for conservation and better protection of the world's special places can only result if we succeed in blowing our audiences away.

My observation is that the best interpreters know this. They realize that even visitors who are predisposed to learning aren't going to recall a lot of the factual information they impart in their interpretation. But if that information is relevant enough to serve the more fundamental purpose of provoking those people to think and make meaning, the forgetting doesn't matter. The more the visitors think and make their own connections, the more profound their experience is going to be, and the more likely the experience can lead them to actually care about the place or what it represents.

### **How can an interpreter facilitate meaning making?**

There are lots of ways, but I briefly want to mention just two easy ones.

*Develop a relevant moral to the story:*

One way is to get into the habit of thinking of each of your interpretive products, and each logical part of it (whether it's a whole day activity, a 30-minute episode, a particular stretch of water or land that's being traveled — i.e., a unit you can introduce and bring closure to) as if it were a *story* that potentially has a significant *moral* or some important (not arcane) overriding lesson that can be learned — a strongly relevant conclusion or implication that can be extracted. Using your knowledge of your audience, decide on a moral to the interpretive product that matters first to you and one which you know will also matter to *them*. Now simply develop or present the thing in a way that brings the moral to the surface in a compelling way. As some of you know this is the gist of what I call thematic interpretation.



*Get people talking:*

Another thing you can do is to get visitors out of listening or reading mode and into talking mode more often. Most interpreters know that getting people involved in what you're doing is almost always a good thing to do, but there's a more specific purpose to getting them talking.

As we've been discussing, when we're provoked to think about something, the thoughts we have create meanings in our minds about it. The more thoughts we have, the more meanings we make, and the more meaningful the thing becomes. But studies on free-choice learning show that another layer of meaning is created when we exchange those meanings with another person. In other words, thinking makes meaning making happen, and talking about those meanings can deepen them. In museum studies, this has been called "conversational elaboration."

About 70 years ago, the celebrated psychologist, George Mead, advanced a really simple idea that dramatically changed psychological theory and research. He said, "You know, thinking is nothing more than a conversation you have with yourself inside your own head."

Many decades of psychological research have generally supported this way of looking at the thinking process, and in fact, today most approaches to studying people's inner thoughts are based one way or another on Mead's view that our thoughts are just things we say to ourselves inside our own heads. In many of these approaches, the idea is to find ways to get the inner conversation on the outside so that we can hear it, or look at it, and know how much people are actually thinking and what they're thinking about.

Fortunately, people often make this easy for us, because after being moved or profoundly affected by something, they usually want to talk about it. That is, what is thought provoking is also talk provoking. Of course, we've all experienced this ourselves. Think back again to when you finished reading that book that really impacted you. As you read the last sentence of the last page, chances are your chin tilted up a bit and you just sat or laid there thinking, "*Wow*." That's all — "*Wow*". That, ladies and gentlemen, is the phenomenon of interest in interpretation. Blowing visitors away. *Wow*.

Had someone charged into the room just then and asked you something about the book, you probably couldn't have responded right away. You were provoked with so many different thoughts at that moment that singling out just one would have been impossible. As you fell asleep that night, the book was probably one of your last thoughts; and the next morning it was probably one of the first thoughts you had. After you went through your morning routine and readied yourself for the day, you went to work or some other place where there were other people. Do you recall the first thing that came out of your mouth after the usual greetings were exchanged? Almost certainly it was a question: "Have *you* read this book?" followed by a full barrage of everything you wanted to say about it. When we're provoked to thought, we're almost always provoked to talk, as long as we're socially comfortable with the people we're with.

Here's a math problem for you to solve:

Deb, Kathy, Sue and Danielle are on a whale-watching cruise off the coast of California. Early one morning they're standing out on deck looking at a pod of

gray whales as a guide presents a commentary about whale behavior. While listening to the commentary and the occasional “oohs and ahs” of the crowd around them, Deb begins chatting with Kathy, and Sue with Danielle, about what they’re hearing and seeing. Not counting the guide’s commentary, how many conversations are going on in the foursome?

The answer is *six*. There’s the Deb-Kathy conversation, the Sue-Danielle conversation, plus the four private conversations going on inside each of their heads. As they watch the whales and listen to the guide, each of the women is forming her own thoughts, making her own meanings, and then checking them against those expressed by the other person — and with each exchange, elaborating and deepening those between her own ears.

This is how meaning making happens. Always there must be the internal conversation inside the individual visitor’s head — the one your interpretation provoked. And when circumstances permit it, an added or refined layer of meaning is made when he or she can talk about it with another person (“conversational elaboration”).

So try to get your visitors talking back and among themselves. If you’ve provoked them to think, their conversations will deepen the impact you wanted to have.

### **What are the benefits of a profound experience?**

One of them is that it’s good for business, whether you’re a for-profit or non-profit organization. When we’re truly blown away by something, it captivates our minds, putting us in a sort of mental prison, making us want to think even *more* about it, and as we just saw, if the right opportunity presents itself, to tell other people about it. And, if it’s a positive thing, we want to *continue remembering* it and to have things in our possession or around us that will later trigger and re-trigger our recollections of it.

The joy of remembering and telling others is key to the power and longevity of the experience. And according to today’s economic gurus, it is mainly the *anticipation of powerfully positive memories* that determines how much we’re willing to pay for our travel experiences. *Memory matters.*

Despite the fact that psychologists have been studying human memory for almost two centuries, we still have a lot to learn about how it works. Any attempt to simplify the processes involved or to gloss over how they influence our thinking and impact our behavior would almost certainly be error prone, if not just plain wrong. But impacting memory (particularly long-term memory) is probably at the heart of what most people in our business mean when they say they want to make a “difference.”

Influencing memory is important if you want to make a difference in how visitors think and feel about a place or thing because their memory is the *only source* of whatever caring they’re even capable of doing. As we’ve seen, achieving this sort of outcome depends first and foremost on provoking visitors to make their own meanings. Since our memory of anything is nothing more than the meanings we’ve stored in our minds about it, you can think of meaning making as

memory making. In this sense, every interpreter or guide who succeeds as a facilitator of meaning making also succeeds as a facilitator of “memory making.”

The Australian state of Tasmania expresses its tourism brand in a single phrase: “Creating Unforgettable Natural Experiences.” In this phrase, the Tasmanians have captured the relationship between meaningful experience and memory. In fact, many government organizations around the world (including parks, zoos, aquaria, museums, monuments, and tourism bodies), and all kinds of private enterprises (travel and tour operators, cruise companies, outfitters, guides, and food and beverage manufacturers who offer interpretive programs), have singled out “memory making” as their main business.

Obviously, we want people to remember the places they visit and the things they do there, because if those memories are good ones, they can result in even more good things (such as caring, stewardship, repeat visitation, positive word-of-mouth advertising, souvenir and merchandise sales, and future purchases). Some of these may be the sort of differences you’re interested in making.

Probably the best known source on the business side of experience and memory making is Joseph Pine & James Gilmore’s *The Experience Economy*. In their words:

...while the *work* of the experience stager perishes upon its performance...the *value* of the experience lingers in the memory of any individual who was engaged by the event...to make that shared experience a part of everyday conversation for months, and even years, afterward. While the experience itself lacks tangibility, people greatly value the offering because its value lies within them, where it remains long afterward.

Pine and Gilmore have described how it probably goes for all of us when we have unforgettable experiences. If you think of it as a three-step process, you can see why powerful interpretation at a place might catalyze things:

*People think;  
they make meaning about things that matter to them;  
they remember.*

But there’s one additional benefit from profound experience that I want to mention in more detail. This benefit starts with the thinking a visitor does about a place or its features (whether those features be land or water or wildlife or buildings or the local inhabitants, their buildings, their food or music or way of life).

As I’ve mentioned many times now, if the thinking they do is deep enough it creates a process of meaning making between the person’s ears. Every thought equates to a meaning. A dozen thoughts equates to a dozen meanings. The more meanings that are made, the more full of meaning the place or feature becomes. A short way to say this is that when visitors’ experiences are profound — when the things they do, see, hear, smell, touch and taste provoke them to think *a lot* about the place or feature — the place or feature becomes meaningful. These meaning *ARE* the experience we’ve been talking about. *Meaning making and experience are one in the same.*

As we all know, things that are meaningful to us become important to us, one way or the other.

Things that profoundly bother or annoy us are meaningful in a negative way. But things that bring us strongly pleasant memories, that make us happy, or greatly uplift us, become meaningful in a positive way. These are the things we value most in life.

And the end result of all this good thinking is that people usually care about things that are meaningful to them. And given a reasonable opportunity to do so, they'll want somehow to care *for* them, express their love of them, protect them, preserve them, whatever behavior is appropriate for the situation.

The US National Park Service's has wrapped its entire Interpretive Development Program around the philosophy that it isn't enough to educate Americans about the value of our national parks. We must make them care *ABOUT* them if we want those same people to care *FOR* them. The Park Service recognizes what psychologists have known for a long time — that the only caring any of us is even *capable* of doing will ultimately be based on the meanings we *ourselves* make between our own ears. And we make meaning only through the thoughts we have.

Understanding that a visitor's experience resides in her or his thoughts tells us something about the importance of powerful interpretation in the making-a-difference business. It tells us that the way to inspire action is to first provoke effortful thought.

Some of my own work using interpretation to influence tourist behavior bears this out.

In 1998, I worked with Lindblad Expeditions in Galapagos to design an interpretive program that not only would give their guests a profound experience with the incredible natural and human history of the archipelago, but which would increase guest donations to the Galapagos Conservation Fund — a fund established by Lindblad to support conservation and management of the Galapagos Archipelago.

Training the expedition staff and guides in what we were trying to accomplish, and relying on their commentaries as well as a number of non-personal interpretive materials we developed, our strategy was to blow people away with what they were seeing while subtly introducing a number of targeted messages that would help them see that acting somehow in behalf of the islands was a very good thing to do. The fund itself is just briefly mentioned, and only towards the end of the 7-day journey. The opportunity to direct a donation of any size to the fund is presented via a written invitation placed in the guest cabins on the final evening of the cruise. Everything is kept low key, private and confidential.

The immediate result after rolling out the new interpretive program in 1998 was an increase in donations by nearly 300 percent over what guests were previously contributing. A few weeks ago Sven Lindblad called to tell me that it's now around 400 percent. The last report I have is that the GCF is generating about \$500K per year and that the funds have paid for the successful eradication of feral goats and pigs on one of the most threatened islands in the archipelago. This is what just one operator has achieved with a small boat holding just 80 passengers.

A couple of years ago, one of my doctoral students at Yale University, Bob Powell, did a follow-up study that found that the guests' tendency toward philanthropy was *unrelated* to how much they had actually learned about the Galapagos during their trip (as measured by a pre- and post-test of natural and cultural history knowledge). It did, however, correlate strongly with how much they *felt* they had learned. In this case, their subjective assessment of knowledge gain can probably be considered a proxy for how many new meanings they had made — a sort of “blowing away” index.

These results, and others I could cite, suggest a sort of two-part strategy for an interpreter who wants to make a difference:

**First**, blow the people away in a positive way.

**Second**, give them a reasonable opportunity to act on what matters to them (something they can realistically do in the fairly immediate time frame).

Earlier, I mentioned that sometimes the behavior of interest involves not donating money or some other personal resource, but rather simply lending one's goodwill or willingness to behave or not behave in certain ways.

A two-year study I've just completed in Australia involved visitors walking a trail to a place called Russell Falls in Mt. Field National Park, Tasmania. Here, the behavior had to do with litter and garbage. But it wasn't focused on persuading hikers not to litter, as you might expect. Rather we were trying to inspire them to pick up and carry out *other people's* garbage. Using exactly the same approach as we used in the Galapagos, we've found that we were able to increase the percentage of people voluntarily picking up litter by 20% compared to a control group.

And we applied the same two-step process in deterring bird feeding and off trail walking in two other Australian national parks, as well as getting people to use mass transit instead of driving their cars in still another national park in Tasmania.

A consistent finding when we debriefed with the people we interviewed in our studies was that they were happy, even grateful for the opportunity to be part of the solution and to be able to participate in the protection and stewardship of the place. Many of them *thanked* us for giving them a way to express their caring. It made them feel good to know they'd made a positive difference.

The reason the businesses and organizations I mentioned are making these kinds of efforts is simple: Like us, they also care, and they believe that if their customers are given a chance to express their affinity for a place in the form of an action, they'll do so, for the simple reason that it makes them feel good to do it.

And virtually every one of the private businesses I've worked with will tell you that operating this way makes eminent business sense. They'll tell you they're more competitive in their market, and that their profits are healthier. The growing educational tourism market that is showing up at your place of work consists of people who are attracted by the idea that their

traveling might make some sort of positive difference in the world. So the prospect of you being a catalyst in this process is probably greater than it has been ever before in history.

### Concluding Remarks

So the moral of my story this evening is that *you* can make a difference. *You* can change the world if you choose to and in the process be more successful as an individual and as an organization, and just like your visitors, you can feel good knowing you've done it.

But to make a difference on *purpose* — as a matter of strategic intent, rather than assuming or wishing and hoping — we need to think of interpreters as facilitators of profound experience, not just as entertaining fact-givers. To enhance an experience, it's OK not to tell visitors everything you know. The important thing in profound experience is that your visitors' are provoked to find their *own* meanings. The more meanings they make, the more they'll be capable of caring about the places and things we interpret for them.

So the interpreter's job isn't to teach anybody anything in the instructional sense, but rather to enhance visitors' experiences by blowing them away —

where more questions, rather than answers, result —

and where degrees of *wondering*, rather than degrees of *knowing*, is the metric of interest...

...because it is the key pathway to cultivating the sense of caring and stewardship we all hope will follow.

As Tourism Tasmania said in its strategic action plan, *The Tasmanian Experience Strategy*,

No longer is interpretation in Tasmania seen as simply entertaining fact-giving. Rather, it is seen as the heart and soul of the tourist experience — as the moulder and shaper of the bonding that takes place between tourists and place.

Experience *is* mean making.

In September 2003, I was browsing through the in-flight magazine on a Qantas flight from Melbourne to Sydney when I noticed an advertisement for this well-known Australian financial newspaper, *Financial Times*. The ad featured several pairs of people sitting around a table, all discussing the paper.

As I looked more deeply at what was going on in the ad, I noticed that each of the people had recently read that day's issue of the paper — some recalling some facts and others different facts. But even though none of them was recalling the same facts, they were all provoked to talk about whatever they had paid attention to and remembered from the paper. That's because some of what they read had mattered to them. It mattered so much that they wanted now to tell another person about the thoughts they were having.

You can see this idea expressed in the tagline in the upper left corner: “Talk Provoking!” In this single clever illustration, the ad had captured more than 25 years of consistent psychological research findings about the nature of experience.

I was impressed with the idea, and I began imagining how the same conversation would go if instead of talking about a newspaper, the people were discussing what they had gotten out of an interpretive program they’d all attended or an exhibit they’d all look at. Since none of them had paid equal attention to the same things, none of them was recalling the same facts or having the same thoughts. I imagined evaluating the interpretation using a test of learning or knowledge recall and realized that every one of them would probably do poorly.

It also occurred to me that by tomorrow or the next day, they’d almost certainly have forgotten most of the isolated facts they’d acquired on the day (except possibly the ones that would later be reinforced or already in long-term memory). So by any long-term measure of learning or knowledge gain, the interpretive program would be judged a failure. Yet, there they all were, motivated and engaged, provoked to think and talk.

Projecting myself into the picture, I could easily imagine that despite all their forgetting, the conclusions they were drawing and the meanings they were extracting from the interpretation might nevertheless stick for some time. In fact, I knew from research that with enough thinking and reinforcement, they might even endure forever.

Since seeing that ad, I’ve always thought it perfectly depicted the Meaning Making view of experience that I’ve presented to you tonight.

If you want to make good decisions about designing and delivering interpretation that provokes people you encounter to thought, then you would do well to start by envisioning those people sitting around a table, or in their homes, days and weeks after their time with you. Envision empty dialogue bubbles above their heads and ask yourself how you might like them to be filled in with real words, real thoughts, the morals of the story they took home with them. I think this might be the kind of question we should be asking ourselves when it comes to enhancing visitors’ experiences in a way that can make a difference in the world.

Thanks for your kind attention.

CITATION: Ham, Sam H. (2007). From interpretation to protection: Is there a theoretical basis? *Journal of the Association for Heritage Interpretation* 12(3): 20-23.

### **From Interpretation to Protection — Is There a Theoretical Basis?**

Professor Sam H. Ham, Ph.D.  
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Perhaps the most oft-cited phrase in all the interpretation literature is a nine-word sentence written by an anonymous US National Park Service ranger in an obscure administrative manual a half century ago:

*Through interpretation, understanding; through understanding, appreciation; through appreciation, protection*

When Freeman Tilden (1957: 38) quoted the manual in *Interpreting Our Heritage*, he said he hoped interpreters everywhere would remember and recite the philosophy frequently. Were he alive today, however, even he would be struck by the reach of his own impact. A half century later, those nine words have evolved into a philosophical orientation around which interpreters all across the globe have rallied.

But does the chain of events Tilden describes really stand up, or are his words just a nice, warm and fuzzy phrase? Is there a substantiated theoretical basis for claiming that 'interpretation' can create a kind of 'understanding' that would indeed lead people to 'protect' the places they visit? I think the weight of the evidence says, 'yes.'

If we see interpretation as a communication process, we're able to draw on recent advances in cognitive and behavioural psychology to examine the cause-and-effect-relationships he (and the anonymous ranger) claimed would occur when interpretation is done well. In fact, in just the past 30 years, hundreds of published studies have looked at these very relationships. The two main theoretical foundations that have guided these studies are the theory of planned behaviour (TPB) and the elaboration likelihood model of persuasion (ELM). When we re-examine Tilden's hypotheses in light of these theories, we're led to the inescapable conclusion that the man was possibly even more brilliant than we had earlier known. The ideas contained in his famous quotation turn out to be not only defensible according to many studies, but because he promoted this view of 'protection through interpretation' nearly 20 years before either the TPB or ELM were known to cognitive scientists, some might even call him a genius.



## Through Interpretation, Understanding

Interpretation is provocation, not instruction. In other words, we're not trying to teach anything to anybody; we're simply trying to blow them away by provoking them to deep thought. In psychology, effortful thought is called elaboration. The process of thinking about something produces a person's subjective understanding of it. That is, when we think deeply about a thing, we make our own meanings about it, and these meanings constitute our understanding of it. Therefore, the more interpretation provokes people to think about something, the more they understand the thing in their own way. Tilden referred to these as 'personal truths.'

Research on the ELM has indeed demonstrated that the more communication provokes us to think, the more we create personal meanings about the subject. That is, provocation leads to meaning, or understanding. But notice that understanding is not the same as 'knowledge' in an academic sense. In fact, studies show that the more an interpreter blows people away with her/his interpretation, the *less* likely they are to do well on a test of the facts that were actually presented. Understanding is a more personal set of 'facts' that wouldn't necessarily be included in a factual-recall evaluation. Somehow, Tilden knew this, even though it flew in the face of prevailing communication theory during his time.

Your understanding about something is simply what you think about. It's like having sentences in the head (or 'schemas' as we call them in psychology). These sentences are the beliefs you have. They may not be entirely accurate, and other people might disagree with your beliefs about the thing, but they are, for all intents and purposes, *your understanding* of it.

So when interpretation provokes a person to think, it causes an elaboration process that creates or otherwise impacts understanding, generating a sort of internal conversation in the person's mind that, in turn, produces new beliefs or causes existing beliefs either to be reinforced or changed. Since what you believe about something constitutes your understanding of it, Tilden was certainly on the right track by claiming that interpretation done well can lead to understanding. So far, so good.

## Through Understanding, Appreciation

But how might understanding lead to appreciation? Enter here the TPB that has led to literally hundreds of studies showing that people's beliefs about something give rise to their attitude about it. Attitudes are not the same as beliefs. Whereas a belief describes what 'is', an attitude describes what a person feels about it, whether it's good or bad, right or wrong, positive or negative. Feelings such as liking, loving, caring and appreciating are attitudes. When Tilden says that our understanding of something can lead to an appreciation of it, he's saying that our beliefs about a thing give rise to

attitudes about it that are consistent with the beliefs. This is well established by psychological studies, provided that we're clear on the thing the beliefs and attitude refer to.

The last sentence above is important because a concept like 'appreciation' is vague until the object of appreciation is specified. In other words, what is it that is being appreciated? For understanding to lead to appreciation, that is, for beliefs to lead to attitudes, the beliefs and attitude must focus on the same thing. If we wish visitors to appreciate a *place*, then it will be their understanding of the *place* that will determine their attitude about that place; if we want them to appreciate a concept like '*biodiversity*,' then it will be their beliefs about *biodiversity* that will determine their attitudes about it. This need to match beliefs and attitudes to their object (the place, the concept, etc.) is called in psychology the principle of compatibility (or symmetry). The evidence supporting this principle is so deep that it is now being discussed as a law of human psychology (Ajzen 2005). To influence an attitude about something, a communicator *must* first influence the beliefs a person holds about that same thing. Tilden (p. 37) rightly saw a far-reaching range of potential attitude objects:

*...a national park, a prehistoric ruin, an historic battlefield or a precious monument of our wise and historic ancestors*

What he was saying, and which is supported by many dozens of studies conducted in just the past two decades, is that if an interpreter provokes an audience to think and make personal meanings about any one of these things, then appreciation of that thing is going to be a natural consequence. Again, Tilden's claim holds up well, provided that the meanings made are positive ones.

### **Through Appreciation, Protection**

When Tilden described the link between appreciation and 'protection,' he was saying that having an appreciative attitude about something would lead to certain behaviours. For the most part, he was referring to deterring vandalism and careless actions such as throwing lit cigarettes into dry vegetation (p. 38):

*He that understands will not wilfully deface, for when he truly understands, he knows that it is in some degree a part of himself...If you vandalize a beautiful thing, you vandalize yourself. And this is what true interpretation can inject into the consciousness.*

'Appreciation' to Tilden was a special type of attitude, a *general* one of the kind a parent feels for a child. He reasoned simply that people would not knowingly harm the things they love. Since he was referring to a general case, he couldn't possibly anticipate every conceivable action a person might or might not carry out. But the point he was

trying to make was that if a person is provoked to deep thought about a thing then that person will make a lot of personal meanings with respect to it. Meaningful things matter to us, and given the opportunity to act one way or another with respect to a meaningful thing, we will normally choose to behave in a respectful or protective way. Both common sense and research back up this claim.

Today, however, interpreters are often interested in using interpretation as a management tool aimed at deterring or eliminating very *specific* visitor behaviours in fragile settings. My own research in just the past ten years has dealt with problems of proper food storage by campers in bear country, reducing wildlife feeding in national parks, persuading visitors to carry out litter left by other visitors, keeping dogs on leads, and convincing tourists to donate to local conservation funds. The behaviour of interest in each of these cases was very specific and different from the rest, and the word 'protection' in Tilden's philosophical statement doesn't capture the specificity of each of these behaviours or the differences between them.

A consistent finding in studies on human behaviour modification is that in order to be successful in influencing people to behave in a given way, we must succeed in influencing those people's beliefs about that specific *behaviour*. If their beliefs about engaging in the *behaviour* are predominantly positive, it will lead them to have a positive (appreciative) attitude about the *behaviour*, which in turn, increases the likelihood that they will behave as we want. Studies, however, do not back up the idea that a general attitude about a thing will lead to specific behaviours with respect to the thing. Rather they show that other factors influence our attitudes about a specific behaviour that might have little to do with our general attitude. This explains why all environmentalists don't recycle at home, and not all of them donate money to every cause or join every conservation organization. Those behaviours (recycling at home, donating and joining) are subject to beliefs, not just about nature and the environment, but about the specific behaviour in question. This is the above cited 'principle of compatibility' at work again. According to many TPB studies, to influence a behaviour we must start by influencing people's beliefs about that specific *behaviour*.

But the principle of compatibility does not in any way refute Tilden's logic that 'appreciation' leads to 'protection.' Indeed, if we think of 'appreciation' as having a positive attitude about something, and if that something is a behaviour, then the attitude-behaviour link holds up well according to literally hundreds of studies conducted in the past 30 years or so. Therefore, interpretation that provokes the formation of positive beliefs about the outcomes of a given behaviour will result in a positive attitude about that behaviour. When this occurs, the likelihood that a visitor will engage in the desired behaviour is significantly enhanced. In other words, through appreciation, protection.

## Conclusion

While it may not surprise some to hear that Tilden actually knew what he was talking about, we must remember that the chain of events he described was based on an intuitive understanding of communication that was not supported or advocated by cognitive science during his time. His idea that meanings were personal conclusions generated in the visitor's mind (rather than being put there by the fact-bearing interpreter) was nothing short of radical thinking in the 1950s when a more didactic view of communication was prevalent. Yet somehow Tilden had already figured out that the only caring any of us is even capable of doing will be that which is based on the meanings we, ourselves, make. Interpretation that provokes visitors to think in positive ways about a thing will make that thing matter. When things matter to us, we act in their behalf. Although today this makes plain sense to most interpreters, Tilden's understanding of this process, and his articulation of it in those nine words 50 years ago, suggest that he (and perhaps the anonymous ranger) were even brighter than some of us might have thought.

## References

- Ajzen, I. (2005). Laws of human behavior: symmetry, compatibility, and attitude-behavior correspondence. In A. Beauducel, A., Biehl, B., Bosniak, M., Conrad, W., Schönberger, G., & Wagener, D. (Eds.), *Multivariate research strategies*. Maastricht, Netherlands: Shaker Publishers, 3-19.
- Tilden, F. (1957). *Interpreting our heritage*. Chapel Hill, North Carolina, USA: University of North Carolina Press.

## **POST-TRAINING ASSIGNMENT**

Ninety days after the completion of this program, the employee and his/her supervisor should sit down and discuss the impact and assess the effectiveness this program has had on the employee. Then both the supervisor and employee should login to the Employee Training Management System (ETMS) and complete the Post-Training Evaluation form (an email will be sent to both employee and supervisor notifying them that the evaluation needs to be completed).

The post-training evaluation process is intended to provide a bridge between classroom instruction and the on-the-job application of training. The information obtained through this process will assist the training participant, supervisor, and Training Center in providing a return on the investment the Department has on training.

**TRAINING FOR INTERPRETIVE TRAINERS GROUP 5 – AGENDA**  
**May 10-14, 2009**

**Sunday**

**May 10**

1500-	REGISTRATION: <i>Check-in at the Asilomar Administration Building</i>	All
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**Monday**

**May 11**

0800-0900	Welcome, Overview, Program Orientation	Skinner
0900-1000	The Art of Welcome	Hammack
1000-1200	Principles of Adult Learning/Training Skills	Doub
1200-1300	Lunch	
1300-1400	Principles of Adult Learning/Group Leader Training Skills	Doub
1400-1730	Training for Interpreting to Children – Grades 2-8	O'Brien

**Tuesday**

**May 12**

0800-0830	Discussions of Readings	Ham
0830-0930	Lessons Learned About Interpretive Training	Ham
0930-1200	The Endgame of Interpretation, Meaning Making Paradigm	Ham
1200-1300	Lunch	
1300-1500	Determining Excellence - The Zone of Tolerance	Ham
1500-1700	The Essential Qualities of Interpretation	Ham

**Wednesday**

**May 13**

0800-1000	Theme Development, Outlines, and Components of Sequential Interpretive Programs	Ham
1000-1200	Video Analysis and Theme Development	
1200-1300	Lunch	
1300-1500	Practice (Groups Develop Detailed Outlines for a KAT-talk or Thematic Map for a KAT-walk)	Ham
1500-1530	Presentation of Outlines and Thematic Maps	All
1530-1630	Final Q&A About Interpretive Training	All
1630-1700	Summary of Workshop and Closure	Ham

**TRAINING FOR INTERPRETIVE TRAINERS GROUP 5 – AGENDA**  
**May 10-14, 2009**

**Thursday**

**May 14**

0800-0930	Training for Interpreting to Children Preschool, K-1	Revelas
0930-1130	Role of Interpretation in the 21 <sup>st</sup> Century/Defining and Unifying our Messages	Pozzi
1130-1200	Program Summary and Evaluation	Skinner
1200	Lunch and Departure	

## TRAINING FOR INTERPRETIVE TRAINERS

<u>PROGRAM OUTLINE</u>	<u>28 HOURS</u>
<u>PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION</u> .....	1.0
Orientation.....	
Evaluation and Review.....	
<u>TRAINING FOR INTERPRETIVE TRAINERS</u> .....	2.0
Overview .....	
The Art of Welcome.....	
<u>THE ROLE OF INTERPRETATION IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY</u> .....	2.0
<u>INTERPRETIVE TRAINING</u> .....	19.0
Principles of Adult Learning/Training Skills .....	
Discussions of Readings .....	
Lessons Learned About Interpretive Training.....	
The Endgame of Interpretation, Meaning of Making Paradigm .....	
Determining Excellence – The Zone of Tolerance .....	
The Essential Qualities of Interpretation.....	
Theme Development, Outlines, and Components of Sequential Interpretive. Programs.....	
Video Analysis and Theme Development.....	
Practice (Groups Develop Detailed Outlines for a KAT–talk .....	
or Thematic Map for a KAT–walk) .....	
Presentation of Outlines and Thematic Maps.....	
Final Q&A About Interpretive Training.....	
Summary of Workshop and Closure.....	
<u>AN ENTIRELY SEPARATE PROGRAM - INTERPRETING WITH CHILDREN</u> .....	4.0
Pre-School Through Third Grade .....	
Training for Interpreting to Children – Grades 2 Through 8	
<b>TOTAL HOURS</b> .....	<b>28</b>



## TRAINING FOR INTERPRETIVE TRAINERS

### OVERALL PURPOSE OF THE COURSE

Purpose: To provide interpretive trainers with a solid foundation for developing and conducting an introductory training workshop in interpretive program delivery. The primary attendees of an introductory workshop may include seasonal employees, docents, rangers, guides and interpreters. Participants in this Training for Interpretive Trainers course will be given a model training agenda to use as a guide as they learn to develop a training program tailored to the needs of their district interpretive operations.

Program Objectives: By the close of the training program participants will

1. Possess a renewed set of skills, knowledge, and ideas for implementing an introductory interpretive training course for their district.
2. Define the steps for planning and developing an interpretive training course.
3. Develop a draft outline for their introductory interpretive training course.
4. Demonstrate a minimum of two new methods for teaching TORE/RAPPORT.

### PROGRAM ORIENTATION AND OVERVIEW

Purpose: Participants will meet one another and the program facilitator. The group will share expectations for the training program. Program content will be reviewed and registration for Monterey Peninsula College completed.

Performance Objectives: By the close of the training program participants will

1. Complete Monterey Peninsula College registration materials.
2. Share and record expectations with group members.
3. Identify the different methodologies used to “Train the Trainer” = role model, research-based training/learning methods.
4. Review program content, procedures, and evaluation processes.
5. Adhere to all Training Center Guidelines.

## INTRODUCTION TO T4IT, THE ART OF WELCOME, FACILITATOR SKILLS

Purpose: Participants, in their role as interpretive trainers and facilitators are required to plan, implement, evaluate, and conduct training activities for employees and volunteers. This session is designed to familiarize participants with the “art of welcome” and give participants an appreciation for the importance of creating a cohesive learning environment. Participants will understand that the foundation set by the facilitator/trainer is a vital link to the success of the overall training program.

Performance Objectives: By the close of the training program participants will

1. Participate in ice-breaker activities and understand the importance of “setting the tone” in a training environment.
2. Develop strategies for creating a cohesive learning environment.
3. Define their role as a “facilitator” of a training course.

## PRINCIPLES OF ADULT LEARNING/GROUP LEADER/TRAINER SKILLS

Purpose: Participants will be exposed to principles of adult learning and the many facets of educational psychology they can apply to their role as trainer. Participants will become familiar with different learning and teaching styles and the best methods for training adults in a learning environment. This session is designed to give individuals the necessary skills to perform general training functions. Participants will examine the elements of training design and prepare to practice skills necessary to conduct a learning event.

Performance Objectives: By the close of the training program participants will

1. Describe the role of a trainer.
2. Demonstrate at least three key communications skills and six interactive methods of teaching.
3. Demonstrate the ability to train participants using at least four teaching strategies.
4. Create a specific plan, date, time, strategies/exercises for an introductory training course tailored to the needs of your district.

## OVERVIEW OF CHILDREN'S INTERPRETATION - AN ENTIRELY SEPARATE PROGRAM

Purpose: To awaken the participant's inner child while inspiring them to present separate training for children's interpretation.

Performance Objectives: By the close of the training program participants will

1. Share a variety of suggested literature pertaining to children's interpretation including texts, articles, magazines, professional associations, handouts, and other resources including The Children in Nature Campaign.
2. Discuss statewide curriculum congruency standards and learn ideas for implementing congruency standards into interpretive programs.
3. Share interests and needs for learning about children's interpretation.

## TECHNIQUES FOR WORKING WITH DIFFERENT AGE GROUPS

Purpose: To allow participants to become better acquainted with varying age levels and the needs of different age groups in the learning process.

Performance Objectives: By the close of the training program participants will

1. Describe the needs, attention spans, activity levels, learning processes and capabilities for varying age levels from pre-school through high school.
2. Develop new ideas for working with different age groups including working with mixed age groups such as families.
3. Explain the importance of insuring that every interpretive program is geared toward the specific age level receiving the interpretive experience.
4. Explain the benefits to the community, park, and visitors of providing interpretive programming for teens

## INTERPRETING WITH CHILDREN

Purpose: To motivate, inspire and provide hands-on skills to participants for training staff to present excellent children's interpretive programs.

Performance Objectives: By the close of the training program participants will

1. Possess new ideas and methods for successful children's interpretation.

2. Participate in a variety of hands-on activities, hikes, games, and lessons which model children's interpretation training.
3. Practice facilitating a minimum of two children's activities and participate in a minimum of four activities to observe other participant's facilitation skills.
4. Discuss and share philosophies of children's interpretation and working with children in an outdoor setting.

### THE ENDGAME OF INTERPRETATION

Purpose: To provide participants an evidence-based view of what it means to be "excellent" in interpretation, and to demonstrate how their conduct of excellence has far-reaching influence on their training of others.

Performance Objectives: By the close of the training program participants will

1. Describe three different viewpoints on the "endgame" of interpretation and the major assumption underlying each.
2. Explain in their own words why the meaning-making endgame is preferred.
3. Explain how to critically assess the effectiveness of an interpretive product aimed at facilitating meaning-making.

### THE ESSENTIAL QUALITIES OF INTERPRETATION

Purpose: To provide participants with a review of the essential qualities and principles of interpretation highlighting "RAPPORT" where effective examples of fundamentals are modeled.

Performance Objectives: By the close of the training program participants will

1. Discuss qualities that are essential to successful interpretation and to determine what is required of an individual to achieve goals of excellence.
2. Possess new ideas for methods of instructing the essential qualities.
3. Define the importance of including RAPPORT in the training process.
4. Participate in discussions, games, and activities that may be used in teaching interpretation.

5. Demonstrate an ability to instill a commitment to interpretation in others through group interaction and personal participation.

### THEME DEVELOPMENT, OUTLINE, AND SEQUENTIAL TECHNIQUES

Purpose: To provide participants with theories, methodologies, and models to enable them to instruct interpretive theme development and components of interpretation.

Performance Objectives: By the close of the training program participants will

1. Explore the relationship of a presentation's theme to the program's developmental methods and to state park values.
2. Identify several different methods of theme development and interpretive components.
3. Demonstrate the necessary tools and ideas for activities to facilitate learning of theme development and interpretive components.
4. Participate in several hands-on activities for interpretive themes and sequential techniques.

### THE ROLE OF INTERPRETATION IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY

Purpose: To underscore the importance of the Department's role in providing quality interpretation and to provide an opportunity for input regarding departmental interpretive programs. To discuss unifying statewide messages for instructors to present in training courses.

Performance Objectives: By the close of the training program participants will

1. Have an opportunity to express concerns, ideas, and suggestions regarding the future of interpretation.
2. Participate in a round robin discussion of recommended unifying messages that should be conveyed to all interpreters.

location map for  
**WILLIAM PENN MOTT JR. TRAINING CENTER**  
837 ASILOMAR BLVD.  
PACIFIC GROVE, CALIFORNIA 93950

