

Strengths and Weaknesses of Personal Interpretive Methods

Key:
 Interpretive Strength ● Strong ○ Moderate
 Relative Cost: H High M Moderate L Low

EcoLeaders Interpretation	Audience Characteristics							What You Want To Do			Type of Learning		Comm-unication		Dynamics			Resources			Staff Capacity		Comments
	Unsupportive	Unaware	Aware	Understands	Appreciative	Values	Behaves	Leads	Inform	Inspire	Involve	Passive	Active	One-Way	Two-way	Easily Changed	Flexibility	Integrate with Other Media	Facilities and Equipment Required	Key Operational Budget Items	Cost		
Activity-Based Program	○	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	—	●	—	●	●	●	●	●	• usually no facilities needed (however parts can take place in a visitor centre or shelter) • usually requires some equipment on which activities are based (e.g., dip nets and magnifiers)	Equipment e.g., magnifiers, binoculars • acquisition • maintenance and replacement	M	• a good knowledge (natural and cultural history, stewardship, outdoor skills etc.) • moderate experience and skills in leading group activities • demonstrated communication and facilitating skills and experience	• a strong program type • requires knowledgeable, experienced staff/volunteers • addresses multiple learning styles • engages broad audience
Campfire Program	○	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	—	●	●	●	●	• fire pit and firewood • may require equipment for activities	• Fire Pit and Equipment • seating	M	• a good understanding of the site's natural and cultural history • extensive experience and skills in leading group activities • demonstrated communication skills and experience • skilled on musical instruments a key asset	• limited to sites with fire pits • limited to participants who visit the site in the evening	
Characterization	○	●	●	●	●	○	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	• varies may require facilities equipment, costumes and props	• costumes, artifacts and props acquisition, maintenance and replacement	M	• low to extensive knowledge • training and experience in theatre an asset	• can be very appealing • can address many audiences	
Dramatic Presentation	○	●	●	●	●	○	●	○	●	●	—	●	—	○	●	●	●	• theatre or stage with seating • sound equipment • costumes and props • perhaps lighting, LCD projector and more	• theatre maintenance • costumes, artifacts and props acquisition, maintenance and replacement	H	• script writer requires extensive knowledge of site natural and cultural history • training and experience in theatre an asset	• can be attractive to large audiences • mostly passive learning and one-way communication • weak for repeat audiences	
Demonstration	○	●	●	●	●	○	●	●	●	●	—	●	—	●	●	●	●	Varies • usually requires - facilities - equipment	Equipment • acquisition • maintenance and replacement	L	• a good understanding of the site's natural and cultural history • good communication skills	• flexible, can address repeat visitors	
Outreach/Extension	●	●	●	●	●	●	○	●	●	○	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	Varies • usually requires facilities, vehicles and equipment	Equipment • acquisition • maintenance and replacement	M	• a good understanding of the site's natural and cultural history • demonstrated communication skills and experience	• uncommon in traditional interpretation offerings, very broad variation • can address new audiences	
Guided Tour	○	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	○	●	—	●	—	●	●	• may require vehicles (bus, car, canoe etc.)	May require vehicles (bus, car, canoe etc.) • acquisition • maintenance and replacement	L	• may require experience in leading groups in outdoors (e.g., leading canoe groups) • safety certification (e.g., Red Cross Water Safety for a canoe tour) • a good understanding of the site's features	• a common interpretation service • focuses on traditional audiences	
Special Event	○	●	●	●	●	○	●	○	●	●	—	●	—	●	○	●	●	• usually requires facilities and equipment	Facility and Equipment • acquisition • maintenance and replacement	M/H	• a good understanding of the site's natural and cultural history • experience coordinating volunteers and partner groups in special events	• brief contact • a great opportunity for working with community partner groups	
Interpretive Roving	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	—	●	—	●	●	●	●	• usually requires artifacts, live animals, photos etc.	Equipment • acquisition • maintenance and replacement	L	• extensive knowledge of site natural and cultural history • demonstrated communication skills and experience	• brief contact • very effective in reaching visitors • can adapt to repeat visitors	
Information Roving	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	○	○	●	○	●	—	●	○	●	●	• best with supporting brochures	Support materials • program brochures • information brochures	L	• knowledge of interpretation services available • detailed knowledge of the park an asset	• brief contact • can be a positive first-contact	
Information by Phone	○	●	●	●	●	○	●	●	●	●	—	●	—	●	●	●	●	• office • telephone	• phone costs	L	• extensive knowledge • demonstrated communication skills and experience	• brief contact • can reach remote "visitors"	
Leader Training	○	○	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	—	●	○	●	○	●	●	• requires meeting/lunch room • may require A/V equipment	Awards and Prizes Equipment • acquisition • maintenance and replacement	M	• extensive knowledge of site natural and cultural history • extensive experience and skills in volunteer management • demonstrated communication skills and experience	• especially important if volunteers are to be used • can attract local partner groups	
Living History	○	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	○	●	●	• usually requires historic venue • costumes • artifacts	Facility Costumes, Artifacts and Equipment • acquisition • maintenance and replacement	M/H	• extensive knowledge of site cultural history • training and experience in theatre is an asset	• very engaging when well done • can accommodate repeat visitors	
Long Term Program	○	○	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	—	●	—	●	●	●	●	• classroom or meeting room • may also need - A/V equipment - office support - tools & equipment	• room rental or building maintenance • equipment rental or acquisition, maintenance and replacement • advertising • evaluation and development of reports	M	• strong interpersonal skills for managing a group of enthusiastic participants • extensive background and experience in the program's topic (e.g., Gardening for Wildlife) • skills and experience in project management	• uncommon in traditional interpretation offerings • provides an opportunity for involvement of participants who have special interests and skills • has a major volunteer aspect	
Participatory Setting (in a Visitor Centre)	●	●	●	●	●	●	○	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	• capital costs • staffing • exhibits • artifacts • models	• building maintenance • acquisition, maintenance and replacement of props, artifacts • exhibit design, fabrication (regularly refreshed) • animal care	M / H	• extensive understanding of the natural and cultural history of the park • a strong background in interpretation, education and life-long learning theory • facility management including managing staff • exhibit design and fabrication (for regular refreshing of exhibits to attract repeat visitors) • project management (especially if exhibit design and fabrication is contracted out)	• most expensive option • must be located where visitors congregate • visitor centres require staffing whenever they are open	

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	Unsupportive	Unaware	Aware	Understands	Appreciative	Values	Behaves	Leads	Inform	Inspire	Involve	Passive	Active	One-Way	Two-way	Easily Changed	Flexibility	Integrate with Other Media	Facilities and Equipment Required	Key Operational Budget Items	Cost		
Point Duty	○	●	●	○	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	—	●	○	○	○	• portable, high visibility station • support materials • artifacts, photos, live animals	• acquisition, maintenance and replacement of props, artifacts • may include costs of animal care if live animals used	L	• extensive understanding of the natural and cultural history of the park • excellent communication skills	• brief contact • very inexpensive, flexible • can be tailored to accommodate repeat visitors
Projects	○	○	○	●	○	●	●	○	○	●	—	●	—	●	○	●	○	○	• classroom or meeting room • may also need - office support - tools and equipment	• rental of meeting space and office costs • equipment acquisition, maintenance and replacement • costs of documentation, evaluation and reporting	L / M	• skills and experience in project management • strong interpersonal skills for managing a group of enthusiastic participants • extensive background and experience in the program's topic (e.g., wetland restoration)	• uncommon in traditional interpretation offerings • provides an opportunity for involvement of participants who have special interests and skills
Public Input Meeting	○	○	○	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	—	●	—	●	●	○	○	○	• classroom or meeting room • may also need A/V equipment and office support	• room rental or building maintenance • coffee and snacks • A/V equipment rental or acquisition and maintenance	L	• strong interpersonal skills plus skills and background in multi-stakeholder dialogue • skills and experience in group facilitation • extensive background on topic	• an excellent public relations and planning tool • requires skill and tact • good practice in regional parks management
Step-On Guide (Bus Tours)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	—	●	—	○	○	○	○	• props, artifacts, photographs - acquisition, maintenance and replacement	• props acquisition, maintenance and replacement	L	• a good understanding of the natural and cultural history of the park • good communication skills	• not a strong learning medium • could have revenue generation capacity
Talk (Seminar)	○	○	○	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	—	●	—	○	○	○	○	• classroom or meeting room or amphitheatre • may also need A/V equipment and office support	• room rental or building maintenance • honorarium and expenses for speakers • equipment acquisition, maintenance/replacement	M	• a good understanding of site features and topic covered • public speaking skills • project management skills to organize speakers, book venue, advertise events, look after invited speakers	• an excellent opportunity to engage the many researchers that use the park
Visual and Performing Arts	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	—	●	—	○	○	○	○	• stage • sound system • props • costumes	• stage (include fabrication of access control structures and maintenance) • contract with artists • booking, fee collection	H	• good project management skills to choose and book performers or contract artist, book venue, advertise events, collect and manage revenue • professional or high quality amateur performers and artists	• usually has moderate value as a learning medium • could be valuable in increasing the profile of the park • revenue generation possible
Volunteer and Partner Learning	○	○	○	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	—	●	—	○	○	○	○	• classroom or meeting room • certificates gifts in recognition of achievement • A/V equipment • training materials	• room rental or building maintenance • training materials • recognition materials • office support	M	• skills and training in volunteer management • great public relations skills • training and experience in leadership training • extensive background in training in skills and knowledge desired by volunteers	• essential if the park is contemplating an extensive volunteer program
Workshop	○	○	○	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	—	●	—	○	○	○	○	• classroom or meeting room rental • A/V equipment • may require tools and materials	• room rental or building maintenance • instructor's fees • acquisition, maintenance and replacement of A/V equipment, tool and materials, office and booking	M / H	• skills and training in adult education and life-long learning • good project management skills to choose and book instructors, book venue, advertise events, collect and manage revenue	• an excellent tool for engaging participants who are at high levels of the PPA Stewardship Scale
Artifacts/ Models	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	• generally indoors or under a shelter	• acquisition, maintenance and repair	M	• archival skills	• can be attractive and engaging
Computer-Interactive Stations	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	• almost always indoor space required • requires software, computer, monitor and usually an input device (e.g., mouse or touch screen)	• software development costs • design and fabrication of the station • acquisition, maintenance and repair of computer	H	• competence in computer maintenance	• few people can use a station at one time • requires constant maintenance • non-functioning units are very frustrating to visitors
Exploration/ Discovery Kits	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	• durable packaging • usually includes instructions, activity sheets, class sets of equipment • computer, printer and graphic design software if produced in house	• checking and restocking supplies after each use • maintenance and repair of equipment and packaging	M	• graphic design skills	• can be very engaging if well designed and well maintained • requires constant maintenance • dirty or incomplete kits can be very frustrating to visitors
Gift Shops	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	• vending space • storage for merchandise • cash register and office support	• staffing costs • store maintenance and repair • cost of theft and breakage	M / H	• skills in business management • inventory and cost control	• can generate revenue for investment in other interpretation services • requires staff whenever open
Live Animals	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	• location to house animals • cages /aquaria, food, water	• animal food, bedding materials, medicine • maintenance, repair and replacement of cages etc.	M	• understanding and experience in animal care, display and handling	• can be very attractive to return visitors • most require constant, skilled care
Mass Media	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	• office support		L	• understanding of media, how to contact and engage media, press release • public speaking skills	• excellent for maintaining high profile in community
Mechanical-Interactive Stations	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	• generally indoors or under a shelter • workshop for fabrication and repair	• acquisition, maintenance and repair	M / H	• exhibit design • mechanical skills for maintenance and repair	• few people can use a station at one time • requires regular maintenance • non-functioning units are very frustrating to visitors