Facilitated Dialogue: Interpretation with Visitors

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What is dialogue?

Dialogue is … “the exchange of ideas, opinions, beliefs, and feelings…listening with respect…and being able to express one’s own views with confidence.”

Gammon & Burch, the Dana Centre, London
What is facilitated dialogue?

“Facilitated Dialogue” is a form of interpretive facilitation that uses a strategically designed set of questions – an “arc of dialogue” -- to guide participants into a structured, meaningful, audience-centered conversation about a challenging or controversial topic.
Audience-Centered Interpretation

*Who is your audience?

*Who is your visitor?

*Who do you engage?

(now and in the future)
Identity: Who Am I?

Black woman
Educator
Teacher
Wife
Divorced
Parent
Single parent
Raised by grand parents
Trainer
Lower SES
Privileged
Traveler
First generation
At your table, pair up and share “who you are” ...
Identity

At your table, pair up with someone else and **share**, “how your identity shapes others?”
Why dialogue?

1) What should be the goals of resource management in the National Park System?

2) What policies for resource management are necessary to achieve these goals?

3) What actions are required to implement these policies?
Why dialogue?

1) What should be the goals of resource management in the National Park System?

The overarching goal of NPS resource management should be to steward NPS resources for continuous change that is not yet fully understood, in order to preserve ecological integrity and cultural and historical authenticity, provide visitors with transformative experiences, and form the core of a national conservation land- and seascape.
1) What should be the goals of resource management in the National Park System?

Distinctive and transformative experiences should be available to all Americans in all units of the National Park System. This requires expanding the relevance and benefits of parks to underrepresented minority groups and communities.
The 21st Century Museum/Library Shift

How should libraries and museums evolve as institutions of learning in the 21st century? In light of 21st century demands, libraries and museums should build on current strengths and embrace new approaches such as the ones described in the chart below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>20TH CENTURY MUSEUM/LIBRARY</th>
<th>21ST CENTURY MUSEUM/LIBRARY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primarily content-driven</td>
<td>Combination of audience- and content-driven</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mostly tangible objects (art, books)</td>
<td>Combination of tangible and digital objects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One-way information (institution presents information to audiences)</td>
<td>Multi-directional (co-created experiences involving institution, audiences, and others)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus on presentation and display</td>
<td>Focus on audience engagement and experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emphasis on enhancing knowledge</td>
<td>Emphasis on enhancing knowledge and 21st century skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acts independently</td>
<td>Acts in highly collaborative partnerships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Located in community (operates independently)</td>
<td>Embedded in community (aligned with and acts as a leader on community needs/issues)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning outcomes assumed, implied (content knowledge and skills like critical thinking tend to be byproducts of programming)</td>
<td>Learning outcomes purposeful (content knowledge and 21st century skills like critical thinking are visible, intentional outcomes of audience experiences)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institution leads content development (content tightly edited and controlled)</td>
<td>Content co-created among diverse partners and audiences; accessible in multiple ways</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All libraries and museums—and the people they serve—stand to benefit from becoming more intentional and purposeful about accommodating the lifelong learning needs of people in the 21st century, and doing this work collaboratively in alignment with community needs.
Why dialogue?

* Opportunity to engage in courageous conversations

* Physical and intellectual challenge

* Healing and hope

* Getting the public to appreciate the real
Benefits: Visitors and for YOU

Johari’s Window

- **Known by self**: ask
- **Known by others**: tell
- **Unknown by self**: self-disclosure/exposure
- **Unknown by others**: others’ observation

Open/free area: feedback solicitation
Blind area: shared discovery
Hidden area: self-discovery
Unknown area:
Benefits: Four Truths

* Personal truth
* Forensic truth
* Societal truth
* Reconciliatory truth
Benefits: Four Truths

*Personal truth
*Forensic truth
*Societal truth
*Reconciliatory truth

Climate change, civil rights, civil war, immigration, Biodiversity loss, land use, groundwater removal, overdevelopment, etc…
Components of facilitated dialogue

- Ground rules
- Arc of dialogue
- Shared experience
- Techniques
- Open ended questions
- Facilitation skills
Guidelines

1. Set the Container
2. Suspend Judgment
3. Listen
4. Listen with Empathy
5. Find and Use Your Authentic Voice
6. Tell the Truth As You See It
7. Express Opinion Based on Observations and Experience
8. Allow for Diversity
9. Listen Without Resistance
10. Respect
11. Balance

Graphic 20: Guidelines for Dialogue
Design: Bertha Lucia Fries
Phase 1:
Building Community

Phase 2:
Personal Experience

Phase 3:
Beyond the Personal

Phase 4:
Synthesizing and Meaning making

The Arc Of Dialogue
Shared Experience:
(technique) One Word Check In

Food deserts are communities with little to no access to fresh, healthy, and affordable food.
Techniques
Open-ended Questions
Example #1

The Power of One

What does community mean to you?
Small group

Thinking of the person you mentioned earlier, how is that Person special?
Large Group

How is our community Shaped by those we look Up to?

What is your name and the name of someone who is special to you?
Large Group

What can we do to make our community better?
Example #2

How can NPS better engage 21st century audiences?

Large Group
What is the most powerful experience you’ve had in a park (good or bad)?

Pair share
What can America find most useful in our parks?

Shared Experience
Video Clip

Large Group
Name; What do you do?
Why are you here?

Large Group
What can national parks do to connect to their community?
Civilization began with agriculture. When our nomadic ancestors began to settle and grow their own food, human society was forever changed. Not only did villages, towns and cities begin to flourish, but so did knowledge, the arts and the technological sciences. And for most of history, society's connection to the land was intimate. Human communities, no matter how sophisticated, could not ignore the importance of agriculture. To be far from dependable sources of food was to risk malnutrition and starvation.
The stakes ahead are enormous, and agricultural research stands at the heart of an effective response to the challenges we confront. For agriculture is not only the means of producing food for the billions of humans on the planet, it is the key interface between humans and the natural environment.
Agriculture, for decades, had been associated with the production of basic food crops. Agriculture and farming were synonymous so long as farming was not commercialized. But as the process of economic development accelerated, many more other occupations allied to farming came to be recognized as a part of agriculture. At present, agriculture besides farming includes forestry, fruit cultivation, dairy, poultry, mushroom, bee keeping, arbitrary, etc. Today, marketing, processing, distribution of agricultural products etc. are all accepted as a part of modern agriculture. Thus, agriculture may be defined as the production, processing, marketing and distribution of crops and livestock products.
Conclusion

* Interpretation with visitors is more interesting
* It can be transformative
* You can learn about your visitors
* Used as a tool for evaluation and/or assessment
* It’s authentic
* It’s our jobs to provoke
April 2014

Dear Colleagues,

Every day, I am reminded of the fundamental purpose and mission of the National Park Service. Few organizations benefit from such a clear, critical mission that is still relevant after almost 100 years. As the workforce and partners of the National Park Service, we are driven by this powerful mission. We are blessed with an incredible legacy of love, dedication, and devotion—love for our nation’s natural and cultural inheritance, dedication to its stewardship in perpetuity, and through this work, devotion to perpetuating a civil democratic society.

Every generation has its own set of challenges and opportunities in accomplishing this duty—and ours is no exception. We live in a time of exponential change that often feels chaotic and overwhelming. Climate change, globalization, rapidly changing technologies, economic instability, struggling educational systems, and polarized politics are a few issues swirling around us on a daily basis. Even children’s brains are developing differently due to their intensive use of technology.

We preserve park resources and values for the enjoyment, education and inspiration of this and future generations. Twenty-first-century learners have new needs and desires. Ninety-five percent of learning opportunities occur outside the classroom. Learning is highly personal and can happen anywhere, anytime. People want to engage in making meaning of the world around them. They demand interactive experiences and access to multiple sources of information. They also expect multiple opportunities to participate in decisions on the direction and scope of experiences in national parks and programs and in their communities. These challenges and changes, along with shrinking financial and personnel resources, require us to be highly strategic and make difficult choices in meeting the National Park Service mission.

How, in the face of large-scale change and new attitudes about learning, do we accomplish the mission as clearly stated in the Organic Act? Most importantly, how do we inspire others to be