Definitions Project

The Definitions Project group met in a series of 4 meetings in 2006 with 20 attendees representing federal agencies, professional organizations, and other NGOs. The following definitions resulted from those meetings.

DEFINITIONS

Accessibility
A general term used to describe the degree to which a facility, program, or product is usable by as wide a group of people as possible. (Adapted from Wikipedia)

Accreditation
The recognition of a program or institution that maintains standards of professional practice.

Action Learning
A process in which a group of people comes together more or less regularly to help each other learn from their experience. (Adapted from Dick, B. (1997))
   Related Terms: Action learning and action research Experiential learning, Cooperative learning, Problem based learning, Project based learning, Service learning

Active Learning
A process that provides opportunities for students to meaningfully talk and listen, write, read, reflect upon and interact with the content, ideas, issues, and concerns of an academic subject. (Adapted from Meyer, C., & Jones, T. B. (1993) Promoting active learning: Strategies for the college classroom. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. P. 6)

Adult Learning
The art and science of helping adults (androgogy) learn as [contrasted to] pedagogy as the art and science of teaching children. (Adapted from Smith, M. K. (1996; 1999) 'Andragogy', the encyclopedia of informal education)

Adventure-Based Education
The use of cooperative games, initiative activities, trust activities, high impact activities, and expeditions to effect a change in thinking (including exposure to new skills and generating awareness).

Advocacy
The act or process of defending, promoting and/or sustaining a cause, ideal, or proposal.

Affective
An attribute of the human experience that describes feelings and/or emotions and sometimes attitudes or values.
   Related Terms: Outcome, Objective

Affective Learning
The process by which learners gain an ability to deal in a positive way with their emotions and values. (Adapted from Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development)
   Related Term: Cognitive

Alignment
The effort to ensure that what teachers teach is in accord with what the curriculum says will be taught and what is assessed on official tests. (Adapted from Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development)

Assessment
Measurement of a learner's performance. (Adapted from Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development)
   Related Terms: Evaluation, Evaluation Research, Visitor Studies

Audience
A person or group of persons for whom messages and/or services are designed or delivered. Synonymous terms might include: visitors, learners, customers, users, recreationists, stakeholders, guests, buyers, consumers, clients, patrons.

Audience Research
The systematic gathering of information (descriptive, psychological, contextual) about audiences or visitors.
Related Terms: Visitor Studies, Evaluation, Needs Assessment, Demand Analysis, Human Dimensions

Authority of the Resource
An interpretive approach that cites the resource-based reasons for management policy when dealing with undesirable audience behavior. (Concept originated by Colorado State University professor George Wallace)

Benefit
Lasting, positive and meaningful change over time that results from multiple and diverse learning experiences; refers to collective sociological, psychological, economic, and/or environmental outcomes of education and learning.

Best Practice
Commendable actions and philosophies that demonstrate an awareness of standards and can be replicated.

Brain-Based Learning
Approaches to schooling that educators believe are in accord with recent research on the brain and human learning. (Adapted from Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development)

Capacity Building
Activities that improve an organization's ability to achieve its mission or a person's ability to define and realize his or her goals or do his or her job more effectively. (Adapted from Linnell, D. (2002). *Evaluation of Capacity Building: Lessons from the Field*. Washington DC: Alliance for Nonprofit Management)

Certification
The recognition of an individual who maintains a standard of professional practice. Sometimes used to recognize a program, product or service that maintains or meets an established standard.

Character Education
To develop students socially, ethically, and academically by infusing character development into every aspect of the school culture and curriculum. To help students develop good character, which includes knowing, caring about, and acting upon core ethical values such as respect, responsibility, honesty, fairness, and compassion. (Adapted from Character Education Partnership)

Citizen Science

A term used for a project that aims to make scientific discoveries, verify scientific hypotheses, or gather data which can be used for scientific purposes, and which involves large numbers of people, many of whom have no specific scientific training. Citizen science projects are often run by scientific institutions, research non-governmental organizations, or educational establishments.

Cognitive

An attribute of the human experience that describes knowledge, belief, facts.

Cognitive Learning

The process by which learners acquire knowledge, beliefs facts and thinking skills.

Related Terms: Affective learning, Outcome, Objective

Communication

A process by which information is exchanged through a common system of symbols, signs, language, or behavior.

Community of Practice

Collective, social learning that results in practices that reflect both the pursuit of the learning enterprise and their attendant social relations. (Adatped from Wenger, E. (1998). Communities of Practice: Learning as a Social System. Systems Thinker)

Conservation

Resource—An ethic of planned management of a natural resource or a particular ecosystem based on balancing resource production, use, allocation, and preservation to ensure the sustainability of the resource.
Object—Maintenance and preservation of works of art, artifacts or objects, their protection from future damage, deterioration, or neglect, and the repair or renovation of works that have deteriorated or been damaged.

Related Terms: Preservation; Stewardship

Competencies

Prescribed standards that enable people to perform successfully by achieving specific outcomes and completing tasks effectively. A competency may consist of knowledge, skill, ability, attitudes, values, and/or personal characteristics.

Constructivism

A theory of learning, derived from the theories of Jean Piaget, that suggests individuals actively construct new knowledge from their experiences by building upon and modifying prior knowledge and experience. (Adapted from Wikipedia)

Cooperating Association

A revenue producing non-profit or not-for-profit organization dedicated to supporting the educational and preservation goals of the partnering agency. (Adapted from 2001 USFWS Volunteer Report, page 10; Association for Partners of Public Lands; and Natural Resources Management Gateway)

Related Terms: Friends group

Cooperative Education

A program that combines classroom studies with paid, productive work experience in a field related to an individual's career goals. (Adapted from National Commission on Cooperative Education)

Cooperative Learning

A process that involves students working in teams to accomplish a common goal, under conditions that promote positive interdependence, individual accountability, face-to-face interaction, appropriate use of collaborative skills, and group processing. (Adapted from R.M. Felder and R. Brent, *Cooperative Learning in Technical Courses: Procedures, Pitfalls, and Payoffs*. ERIC Document Reproduction Service, ED 377038 (1994))

Critical Appraisal

The overall observations and expert judgment of exhibition, program, or interpretive product by a professional evaluator (or panel of professional evaluators) to identify obvious or suspected problems which can be immediately corrected or studied later with visitor input. (Adapted from Screven, Shettel, Bitgood, 1993)

Cultural Landscape

A traditionally or historically used and/or modified geographic area. Use or modification may be physical, spiritual or cosmological. (Adapted from The Cultural Landscape Foundation)

Related Terms: Historic preservation, Cultural resources, Cultural resource management

Cultural Resource

A general term used to refer to archaeological sites, historic structures, monuments, artifacts, traditional cultural properties, and/or other human expressions of ethic or national identity. They are places or objects of local or national heritage.

Related Terms: Historic preservation; Cultural landscape; Cultural resource management; Heritage resource

Cultural Resources Management

The process by which the impacts to cultural resources are considered and the effects of potential impacts are mitigated as required under historic preservation laws and statutes. Management includes protection, stabilization, and interpretation.

Related Terms: Cultural resource, Historic preservation, Cultural landscape

Curator

A person knowledgeable about and trained in a field related to the collection in his or her care and is responsible for maintaining the overall well-being and scope of that collection. (Adapted from Curator's Code of Ethics, 1996 Standing Professional Committee of Curators, American Association of Museums)

Curriculum

Typically refers to a written plan outlining what students will be taught (a course of study). Curriculum documents often also include detailed directions or suggestions for teaching the content. Curriculum may refer to all the courses offered at a given school, or all the courses offered at a school in a particular area of study. (Adapted from Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development)

Demand Analysis

The deliberate and systematic process of gathering information and data about current and potential visitors for program and administrative decision-making. (Adapted from Haas and Wells, 2005)

Related Terms: Audience Research, Human Dimensions, Needs Assessment

Differentiated Instruction

A form of instruction that offers several different learning experiences in response to students' varied needs. (Adapted from Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development)

Discovery Center

A facility where people are encouraged to learn about a cultural or natural resource using hands-on, inquiry, and experiential methods.

Docent

A volunteer or paid educator trained to further the public's understanding of the natural, cultural, and historical collections or sites of an institution or facility. (Adapted from Wikipedia)

Ecosystem Management

The integration of ecological, economic and social principles to manage biological and physical systems in a manner that safeguards the long-term ecological integrity, natural diversity, and productivity of the landscape. (Adapted from Bureau of Land Management)

Education

Education is the process of developing an individuals' knowledge, values and skills and encompasses both teaching and learning. (Adapted from Wikipedia)

Educational Philosophy

The study of the purpose, process, history, nature and ideals of education. This can be within the context of education as a social institution or more broadly as the process of human existential growth, i.e., how it is that our understanding of the world is continually transformed (be it from facts, social customs, experiences, or even our own emotions). (Adapted from Wikipedia)

Educational Theory

An organized system of accepted knowledge that applies in a variety of circumstances to explain a specific set of phenomena of or relating to education. (Adapted from Wordnet.Princeton.edu)

Educator

A person involved with the overall process or practice of facilitating learning. Educators often specialize in specific content areas or academic disciplines.

Electronic Media

Technologically delivered content.

Environmental Education

A learning process that increases people's knowledge and awareness about the environment and associated challenges, develops the necessary skills and expertise to address the challenges, and fosters attitudes, motivations, and commitments to make informed decisions and take responsible action. (UNESCO, Tbilisi Declaration, 1978)

Environmental Media

Anything that carries substances or transmits physical actions; i.e., sounds can be transmitted via air, water, and earth; pollen and seeds are commonly carried and distributed by wind, and/or physical contact with other entities; pollution can be moved through air or water currents.

Exhibit

An organized arrangement of text, graphics, and objects that communicate a message or theme. Outside exhibits are often called waysides and may include interpretive signs, kiosks, or other presentation methods developed for use in the outdoors.

Exhibit Design

The process of conceiving an exhibit or other media to convey a message identified by a specific interpretive goal.

Exhibit Development

The process by which exhibit designs become reality; i.e., fabrication or production.

Environmental Learning Center

A facility where visitors can learn about natural and cultural resources and how they interact over time.

Evaluation (Front-End, Formative, Remedial, Summative)

A judgment of worth or merit; an appraisal of value; the careful appraisal and study of something to determine its feasibility or effectiveness at meeting its goals and objectives.

Evaluation is typically divided into four temporal stages: Front-End, Formative, Remedial and Summative Evaluation

Front-end evaluation provides background information for future program planning. It typically is designed to determine an audience's general knowledge, questions, expectations, experiences, learning styles and concerns regarding a topic or theme.

Formative evaluation provides information about how an interpretive media or program can be improved and occurs while a project is underdevelopment. It is a process of systematically checking assumptions and products in order to make changes that improve design or implementation.

Remedial Evaluation is the assessment of how all the individual parts of an interpretive media or program work together as a whole; like formative evaluation the goal of remedial evaluation is to improve educational effectiveness and insure achievement of goals and objectives.

Summative evaluation is conducted after an interpretative media or program is completed and provides information about the impact of that project. It can be as simple as a head count of program attendance or as complex as a study of what individual's learned; what is assessed should be tied to project goals and objectives.

Related Terms: Logic Model, Goals, Objectives, Outputs, Outcomes, Impacts, Visitor Studies

Experiential Education

A philosophy and methodology in which educators purposefully engage with learners in direct experience and focused reflection in order to increase knowledge, develop skills and clarify values. (Association for Experiential Education)

Experiential Learning

The engagement in some activity, reflection upon the activity, critically derive some useful insight from the analysis, and incorporate the result through a change in understanding and/or behavior. (Adapted from David A. Kolb, Experiential Learning: Experience as a Source of Learning and Development, 1984, 3-4)

Explainer

A person who is knowledgeable about a resource and is skilled in teaching others about that resource.
   Related Terms: Docent, Educator, Guide

Facilitator

A person who encourages and enables a process, such as learning, planning and training, interpreting or teaching.
   Related Terms: Docent, Educator

First-person Living History Interpretation

The act of portraying a person from the past (real or composite). The intent of this style is to present the attitudes, briefs, viewpoints, language, and mannerisms of another period in history in a way that is immediate, entertaining, and thought-provoking. Through the portrayal of a character they create for the visitor the illusion that their historic personage has returned to life. Also known as "character interpretation" or "first-person interpretation." (Association for Living History Farms And Museums)

Formal Education/Learning

The hierarchically structured, chronologically graded 'education system', running from primary school through the university and including, in addition to general academic studies, a variety of specialized programs and institutions for full-time technical and professional training. (Adapted from The Encyclopedia of Informal Education, 2006)
   Related Terms: Nonformal Education/Learning, Informal Education/Learning

Formal Interpretation

All scheduled presentations, personal or non-personal, that have a theme, goal and objective with desirable measurable outcomes.

Free Choice Learning

The type of learning guided by a person's needs and interests – learning people engage in throughout their lives to find out more about what is useful, compelling or just plain interesting to them. (Institute for Learning Innovation)

Friends Group

An advocacy organization of interested citizens and volunteers who assist agencies or organizations in building constituency support; soliciting and accepting charitable contributions, grants and funding from other sources. Sometimes inappropriately interchanged with cooperating association – these groups may have a different structure and purpose, depending on the organization with which they are associated.
   Related Terms: Cooperating association

Geography

The science of place, of scale, of movement, and of spatial relationships. The study of the impact of people on the environment, and of the impact of the environment on people. (US Geological Survey)

Goal

A stated desired outcome of a process or project.

Guide

A guide is a person who is knowledgeable about a resource and is skilled in teaching others about that resource, and often accompanies visitors from place to place in the area of the resource.
   Related Terms: Docent, Explainer

Heritage

Nature and culture.

Heritage Resources

Natural and cultural resources.

Historical Demonstrations

A personal interpretation that uses documented methods either of the past or used in the past to assist audiences in understanding a theme, time period or technique.

Historic Preservation

The process or program by which historic environments such as districts, sites, buildings, structures, objects, and landscapes are protected under laws and statutes. (Adapted from Advisory Council on Historic Preservation)
   Related Terms: Cultural resource, Cultural landscape, Cultural resource management

Home Schooling

The process by which children are educated at home rather than at an institution such as a public or private school. (Adapted from Wikipedia)

Human Dimensions

The recognition and acceptance of human dimension factors in resource management; the interface of social science and natural resource management.

Impacts

The collective effects, achievements, benefits or changes brought about by interpretive or education program on its intended audiences or on the environment. Impacts often embody lasting changes such as improved environmental conditions and changes in the way people think and live.
   Related Terms: Outputs, Outcomes, Logic Model

Indicator
A benchmark or specific performance target used to determine success of an outcome.

Informal Education/Learning
The truly lifelong process whereby every individual acquires attitudes, values, skills and knowledge from daily experience and the educative influences and resources in his or her environment — from family and neighbors, from work and play, from the market place, the library and the mass media. (Adapted from The Encyclopedia of Informal Education, 2006)
    Related Terms: Formal Education/Learning, Nonformal Education/Learning

Informal Interpretation
Spontaneous personal interpretive contacts with audiences within a variety of settings.

Informal Learning Environments
The places, venues, and settings where informal learning opportunities are intentionally made available to visitors, such as in parks or museums.

Interdisciplinary
A philosophy of teaching in which content and methods are drawn from several subject areas to examine a central theme, issue, problem, or topic.

Interpretation
A mission-based communication process that forges emotional and intellectual connections between the interests of the audience and meanings inherent in the resource. (National Association for Interpretation)

Interpreter
A person who employs a mission-based communication process that forges emotional and intellectual connections between the interests of the audience and meanings inherent in the resource.

Interpretive
Technique that assists audiences through communication media in making both emotional and intellectual connections with heritage resources.

Interpretive Center
An interpretive center is a facility where opportunities are provided for people to forge emotional and intellectual connections between their interests and the meanings that arise from learning about the resource. The facility may or may not be staffed, and can range in scale from a kiosk to a complex of buildings and natural sites, but always provides information about the natural and cultural resources.

Interpretive Equation
A visual and verbal metaphor for demonstrating the dynamic relationship between the knowledge of heritage resources, knowledge of audiences and use of appropriate interpretive techniques to create interpretive opportunities.

Interpretive Objectives
Desired measurable outputs, outcomes and impacts of interpretive services.

Interpretive Opportunity
A place, time and experience when interpretation may occur.

Interpretive Planning
The decision-making process that blends management needs and resource considerations with visitor desire and ability to pay to determine the most effective way to communicate the message to targeted markets. (National Association for Interpretation)

Interpretive Program
Activities, presentations, publications, audio-visual media, signs, and exhibits that convey key heritage resource messages to audiences. (Adapted from US Fish & Wildlife Service)

Interpretive Services
Any personal or non-personal media delivered to audiences.

Interpretive Theme
A succinct, central message about a topic of interest that a communicator wants to get across to an audience.

Inquiry Learning
A dynamic approach to learning that involves exploring the world, asking questions, making discoveries, and rigorously testing those discoveries in the search for new understanding. (Adapted from The Inquiry Learning Forum)

Interdisciplinary Education
Involves the integration of multiple disciplinary perspectives within a problem-solving or topical context. (Adapted from Deborah Vess)

Learner
A person who is actively engaged in building meaning through acquiring knowledge and skills.

Learner Outcomes
The intended result of an education program. (Adapted from North American Association for Environmental Education; Chicago Wilderness and Lake County Forest Preserves; Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development)

Learning
Human learning is the disposition of human beings to engage in continuous dialogue with the human, social, biological and physical environment that lead to changes in knowledge, skills, attitudes, values and behaviors for interacting constructively with change. (Adapted from International Handbook of Lifelong Learning, 2001)

Learning Styles
The different ways that humans learn; the three dominant being visual, auditory, and kinesthetic. (Adapted from LDPride)

Lifelong Learning
Learning throughout the life cycle, from birth to grave and in different learning environments – formal, non-formal and informal. (Adapted from World Bank)

Living History
An attempt to accurately replicate the past through the use of a physical environment and the sights, sounds and smells of the period being represented. The two major types of interactive living history interpretation are first-person and third-person. (Adapted from Association for Living History Farms and Museums)

Logic Model
An organizing tool or picture of how an interpretive or educational organization or program works. A logic model links outcomes (short- and long-term) with program activities and processes and the theoretical assumptions of the program through tiered objectives: outputs, outcomes and impacts.

Measurement
The assignment of numerals to objects or events according to rules; an operation resulting in standardized classifications of outcomes; in visitor studies or evaluation research, measurement often refers to the tools used to capture data about audiences or visitors and may include such things as observations, interviews, focus groups, surveys and so forth.

Media
Means, methods, devices, or instruments by which the interpretive message is presented to the public.

Multiple Intelligences
Theory by H. Gardner that classifies cognitive abilities according to seven broadly grouped aptitudes: linguistic, logical-mathematical, spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, musical, interpersonal, and intrapersonal. (Adapted from T. Armstrong, 2006)

Museum
A permanent institution in the service of society and of its development, and open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits, for purposes of study, education and enjoyment, material evidence of people and their environment. (Adapted from International Council on Museums)

Museum Educator
A specialist who is trained to further the public's understanding of the natural, cultural, and historical collections and mission of a museum.

Naturalist
A person who is knowledgeable in and often educates others in the characteristics, processes, and history of the natural environment. A person who is an advocate of the doctrine that the world can be understood in scientific terms. A person who studies nature, including landscapes, plants, and animals, usually in their natural surroundings.

Natural Resources
Physical properties, materials, and on-going ecological processes that include but are not limited to air and water atmospheric resources, marine and freshwater systems; geologic features and processes; biological entities and systems; natural sound; day and night sky features and relationships; seasonal and celestial fluctuations; and natural interactive processes.

Nature Center
A facility that brings environments and people together under the guidance of trained professionals to experience and develop relationships with nature. A nature center serves its community and fosters sustainable connections between people and their environment. (Association of Nature Center Administrators)
    Related Terms: Discovery Center, Interpretive Center, Visitor Center

Needs Assessment
A systematic process for determining the needs of a defined population; the process of researching needs, available services, and service gaps by population and geographic area.
    Related Terms: Audience research, Demand analysis

Nonformal Education/Learning   Any organized educational activity outside the established formal system — whether operating separately or as an important feature of some broader activity — that is intended to serve identifiable learning clienteles and learning objectives.
    Adapted from The Encyclopedia of Informal Education, 2006 Formal Education/learning,
    Informal Education/Learning

Nonpersonal Interpretation
Interpretive media that do not require a person to deliver a message (i.e. exhibits, waysides, brochures, signs, magazines, books, etc.).

Objective
A statement of a specific, measurable, and observable result desired from an educational or interpretive activity or experience; a stated expectation about audience, behavior, condition, degree that will result from a learning experience.
    Related Terms: Cognitive, Affective, Psychomotor, Logic Model

Off-site Program
A program conducted away from the practitioner's place of work.

Outcomes
The achievements or changes brought about by a program, project, or activity that help lay the foundation for longer-term impacts or benefits. Outcomes can involve changes in behavior, skills, knowledge, attitudes, values, or condition after participating in a learning activity or experience.
    Related Terms: Outputs, Impacts, Logic model

Outcome-Based Education
OBE specifies the "outcomes" that learners should be able to demonstrate upon leaving the system. These outcomes are derived from a community vision of the skills and knowledge that learners need to be effective citizens. OBE focuses educational practice on ensuring that learners master those outcomes, and it asserts that all learners can succeed. (Adapted from Gwennis McNeir IC Digest 85 November 1993. Outcome-Based Education.)

Outcome-based Evaluation
Evaluation that focuses on measurable learner outcomes rather than outputs.
    Related Terms: Outputs, Outcomes, Logic Model

Outdoor Classroom
Outside sites where structured educational activities that focus on the natural environment and cultural resources occur.

Outdoor Education
Education in, for, and about the outdoors. Inappropriately used synonymously with adventure-based education and environmental education. (Adapted from Donaldson & Donaldson, 1958, Outdoor Education: A definition. JOPER, 29 (17), (63).)

Output
The material products, programs or other media of a program or project. Examples include maps, workshops, curriculum materials, and other media.
    Related Terms: Outcome, Impact, Logic Model

Outreach
The communication of the organization's mission and goals to a wide variety of audiences usually away from the organization's offices, sites or properties.

Performance Measure
A benchmark or specific performance target used to determine the degree to which an outcome is successful.

Personal Interpretation
One person or persons proving interpretation to another person or persons.
    Related Term: Interpretation

Place-based Education/Learning
An interdisciplinary instructional strategy that uses the local environment and community as the context for teaching and learning.
    Related Terms: Project-based Education/Learning, Problem-based Education/Learning

Preservation
The act of protecting a resource for future generations. Cross-reference: conservation; stewardship. (Adapted from Handbook for Museums, Gary Edson nd David Dean, Routledge Press, 1996)
    Related Terms: Conservation, stewardship

Problem-based Education/Learning
An interdisciplinary instructional strategy that engages learners in investigating complex, real-world environmental issues and problem-solving as the context for teaching and learning.
    Related Terms: Project-based Education/Learning, Place-based Education/Learning

Professional Development
A process of learning and keeping up to date in ones area of expertise. The process of progressing in ones chosen career through continuing education and training.
    Related Term: Training

Program
Any type of organized, topic-specific presentation or other delivery of information. Types of programs include:

Community/outreach program – is a program that:
1. Occurs outside of the establish facility or land base
2. Is designed for a broad audience within a geographic community

Education program – is a program that is comprehensive, curriculum based, conducted on or off site for all ages

Environmental education program – is a program that aims to develop an environmentally literate citizen who has the skills, knowledge, and inclination to make well-informed choices as a member of a community (See also NAAEE definition from Tbilisi Declaration)

Interpretive program – is a program that helps accomplish the communication goal that forges emotional and intellectual connections between an audience and meanings inherent in the resources

Junior Ranger program – is a program that engages young people in age appropriate activities and learning and provides a tangible memento for participation

Performing Arts program – is a program that offers opportunities for learners to explore resources using creative skills (i.e., storytelling, poetry reading, dance, drama, music, et al)

Project-based education program (also known in the EE field as issues investigation) – is an instructional strategy that involves students in investigating issues and proposing solutions while integrating subjects across the curriculum

Recreation interpretive program – is a program that offers opportunities for people to improve their outdoor skills (i.e., how to correctly pack a backpack; rock climbing, snowshoeing, Leave No Trace, Tread Lightly)

Safety skill demonstration program – is a program that shows people how to safely enjoy the outdoors (i.e., carrying the right amount of water, boating and hunting safety, how to build a fire)

Scientific demonstration program – is a program that enables the participant to test specific hypotheses using the scientific method (i.e., water and soil sampling, weather studies)

Special event – is an event that celebrates a topic or theme, involves the community, and occurs outside of regularly scheduled programming.

Project-based Education/Learning
An interdisciplinary instructional strategy that engages learners in complex, real-world projects and experiences as the context for teaching and learning.
    Related Terms: Place-based Education/Learning, Problem-based Education/Learning, Service Learning

Psychomotor

An attribute of human experience that describes behaviors, skills, action; often used to describe learning objectives and/or outcomes.

Public Affairs

An effort to affect public opinion and perceptions on public policy issues; public affairs builds awareness and helps to shape public opinion via communications and strategies designed to influence the public.

Public Archaeology

A process for including the public in or for creating outreach and educational materials based upon the information gleaned from archaeological activity; (2) another term for cultural resource management.

   Related Terms: Cultural resource management

Public History

A process for making the public aware of the value, uses, and pleasures of history and to engage the public in historical activities.

Remedial Evaluation

The assessment of how all individual parts of an exhibition of interpretive project work together as a whole in order to improve the exhibit's impact on visitors.

   Related Terms: Visitor Studies, Evaluation, Evaluation Research

Research

An active, diligent, and systematic process of inquiry aimed at discovering, interpreting, and revising facts. (Adapted from Wikipedia)

Resource issue interpretation

A mission-based interpretive communications process that uses science-based resource condition assessments and findings to deliver specific stewardship messages to target or general audiences with the desired outcome of bringing specific resource issues to resolution.

Resource Issue Interpretation Formula

Consists of identifying an issue, determining an appropriate message, identifying target audience(s) and selecting appropriate interpretive techniques to accomplish resource protection. (National Park Service)

Rubric

Specific criteria or guideline used to evaluate learner outcomes. (Adapted from North American Association for Environmental Education; Chicago Wilderness and Lake County Forest Preserves; Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development)

   Related Term: Measurement

Self-directed Learning

The process whereby the individual takes the initiative and the responsibility for learning. Individuals select, manage, and assess their own learning activities, which can be pursued at any time, in any place, through any means, at any age. (Adapted from Self Directed Learning website)

Service Learning

A teaching and learning strategy that integrates meaningful community service with instruction and reflection to enrich the learning experience, teach civic responsibility, and strengthen communities. (Adapted from National Service Learning Clearing House)

Social Marketing

The application of commercial marketing concepts and techniques to target populations to achieve the goal of positive social change. (Adapted from Wikipedia)

Stakeholder

A person who has a vested interest in a place, program, issue, or process.

   Related Term: Interpretive planning

Standard

Consensus documents or written statements of generally accepted principles that provide a common language to enable museums to communicate about their performance and increase accountability. (Adapted from Standards and Best Practices for Museums, American Association of Museums)

Stewardship

An ethic of caring for, protecting, and responsibly managing resources.

   Related Terms: Conservation, Preservation

Teach

To guide the studies of, to impart the knowledge of, to instruct by precept, example, or experience, make known and accepted. (Adapted from Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary)

Teachable Moment

A recognized serendipitous occurrence that may lead to an interpretive opportunity

Teacher

A person whose role is interpreting, explaining, training, and imparting knowledge and skills about people, places, objects, processes, and relationships with a goal to build meaning in the minds of learners.

Teaching Strategies

The various aspects of sequencing and organizing the content, specifying learning activities, and deciding how to deliver the content and activities. (Adapted from Dick, W., Carey, L., & Carey, J. O. (2001). The systematic design of instruction (5th ed.). New York: Addison Wesley Longman. (p. 184).)

Third Person Interpretation
A mode of living history interpretation, whether costumed or not, in which the interpreter remains contemporary to the audience. Rather than becoming one with the past, the interpreter maintains a historical distance and is analytical and descriptive of the period being represented. This mode of interpreting places interpreters squarely in the role of historians – looking at the past from an objective viewpoint and within a context relative to events before and after the period being interpreted. The third-person interpreter uses quotes, terminology and activities of the past, not in imitation, but as artifact in and of themselves; aspects of the past that can be examined with as much validity as any three-dimensional object. (Association for Living History Farms and Museums)

Training
The systemic process of developing knowledge, skills, abilities, and attitudes for current or future jobs through formal or informal learning experiences.
　　Related Term: Professional development

Underserved
Individuals and groups who have traditionally not had access to or a need for environmental education or interpretive programs, activities, or experiences, usually for reasons of race, income, language, location, social status, or religion

Visitor Center
A facility, open to the public, that provides information about the area's natural and cultural resources. A visitor center may contain exhibits, visitor facilities, and interpretive information.

Visitor Contact Station
Any location, ranging from a table, a kiosk, to a building where people can obtain information about a natural or cultural resource.

Visitor Studies
The interdisciplinary study of human experiences within informal education settings; the systematic collection and analysis of information or data to inform decisions about interpretive exhibits and programs; measuring or assessing the effects of museum exhibitions and/or interpretive programs and media on learners.
　　Related Terms: Evaluation, Evaluation Research

Volunteer
A volunteer is an individual who performs services for an organization for civic, charitable, or humanitarian reasons, without promise, expectation, or receipt of compensation for services rendered.

Wilderness Education
A broad term, which can be used to refer to educational experiences, which are conducted in the wilderness (an outdoor expedition) and/or are about the wilderness (e.g., an indoor class about the biosystem. Inappropriately used synonymously with either outdoor education and/or environmental education.