

# Study Guide: Introduction to Facilitated Dialogue

*In this study, you will think about your role as an interpretive facilitator – and the skills that are needed to interpret **with** your audience rather than **for** them. You will explore the “arc of dialogue” as an interpretive strategy, and identify opportunities to integrate dialogue and co-creation techniques into new and existing programs and media. Estimated time to complete the basic components for this module is 3-4 hours.*

*Investigate*

*Contemplate*

*Actuate*

*Collaborate*

## *How to Use this Study Guide*

This study guide is designed for self-directed, self-paced learning and interaction. You can engage as much or as little as you prefer. The study guide is designed to help you work through a progression of learning in which you 1) *investigate*--study the recommended content, 2) *contemplate*--create your own relevance through intentional reflection, 3) *actuate*--apply the concepts to a personal work strategy and then, importantly, 4) *collaborate*--contribute to a conversation in a community of practice to broaden your understanding and encourage your colleagues. So -- the more you put into it, the more you will get out of it!



## Objectives

While completing the activities in this Study Guide, you will:

- Gain confidence to try new techniques by joining a community of practice with your colleagues in this course of study.
- Consider barriers, challenges and biases that may affect your ability to shift to more audience-centered, dialogic strategies, and identify the potential benefits of overcoming those challenges.
- Articulate a personal vision for incorporating dialogic strategies throughout your interpretive programs and products.
- Develop a starter list of open-ended interpretive questions to integrate into your existing programming.
- Develop a plan for a dialogic interpretive program at your site.

## Investigate

Apply a spirit of inquiry and learning to the following assignments which are designed to introduce you to the why, what and how of interpretive facilitation and dialogue:

### WHY

1) Read about the NPS mandate for facilitation in [Achieving Relevance in our Second Century](#) – pages ii-iii (Letter from the Associate Director), 9 (Goal 1-C), and 26 (Goal 1-C Outcome One).

2) Read the article [Whose Questions, Whose Conversations](#), by Kathleen McLean (excerpted from *Letting Go—Sharing Historical Authority in a User Generated World*, 2011)

### WHAT

Read the following handouts

- [What Is Interpretive Facilitation?](#)
- [What is Facilitated Dialogue?](#)

### HOW

Read the following short documents and explore additional resources:

- [The Arc of Dialogue](#)
- [Designing an Arc of Dialogue Worksheet](#)
- Go to the [21<sup>st</sup> Century Engagement Google Site](#) – explore the resources here and find at least one other reference that helps inform your understanding of dialogue.

## *Contemplate*

*Ponder the personal relevance of what you have learned by considering the following questions... journal your thoughts in the space provided.*

1. On a scale from 1-10 what is your current confidence level in using interpretive facilitation and dialogue at your site? Describe at least one proactive way you will work to increase your confidence.
  
2. Think about the ways you were taught in school and the ways you learned to be an interpreter. How might these experiences influence your approach with your audiences? Would you say you tend to favor a didactic presentation style or a facilitation style? In your own words, describe the difference between the two approaches.
  
3. What is lost or gained by making the shift from didactic, one-way presentations to audience-centered, co-created programming? In each of the following categories, identify at least one challenge and one benefit of making the shift to interpretive facilitation:
  - For you
  
  - For your audiences
  
  - For your site
  
  - For society

## **Actuate**

*Put learning and thinking into action with the following assignments:*

### *Activity 1 – Personal Vision*

Write a paragraph briefly articulating a personal vision statement and commitment to develop more audience-centered, dialogic interpretation. What is your vision for more effectively engaging audiences at your site? Discuss your vision with a colleague or your supervisor and strategize at least one way to begin to implement your ideas.

### *Activity 2 – Open-ended Interpretive Questions*

Refer to the section on open-ended questions in the *Arc of Dialogue Handout* (see the Investigate section above). Brainstorm a list of meaningful, open-ended questions about your site that you could potentially use to replace statements of fact in one of your current programs. The next time you present that program, experiment with one or two of your new questions to facilitate a short conversation with your audience.

### *Activity 3 – Develop a Program Plan*

Use the [\*Designing an Arc of Dialogue Worksheet\*](#) to draft a plan for a facilitated dialogue program at your site.

## **Collaborate**

*Collaboration is important for all our work -- but especially in facilitated approaches and dialogue. It's critical that we don't attempt to develop programs and media in isolation! Get feedback on your thoughts and ideas -- and provide feedback for your colleagues -- using the [\*#facilli82communic8\*](#) Facebook page. This site was created by fellow interpreters as a place to share ideas, resources and thoughts.*

Share one of the following items with your colleagues by creating a post on our facilitated dialogue [Facebook page](#) (see additional instructions below)

- Your personal vision from Activity 1.
- Your list of open-ended interpretive questions from Activity 2.
- Your Dialogue Worksheet from Activity 3.

Read what your colleagues are posting.

Respond to at least one other post of your colleagues who are also sharing their ideas – be sure your feedback is positive and constructive.

***Instructions for sharing on Facebook -- ask for feedback:***

- You will need a personal Facebook account (using a personal email)
- Log in to your account and go to the following link: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/Facili82communic8/>
- Create a new post and copy/paste your responses to Activity 1, 2 or 3 (your choice) from above.
- At the top of your post, identify that you are working on the Facilitated Dialogue Study Guide and ask for constructive feedback.

***Instructions for giving feedback to your colleagues:***

- Search through recent posts from your Facilitated Dialogue colleagues and respond to at least one request for feedback.

***For Further Investigation—Additional Resources and References***

Hungry for more? Check out one or more of the following additional resources:

- *21<sup>st</sup> Century Engagement Google Site – surf and explore the resources on this site*  
<https://sites.google.com/site/nps21ce/home>
- [Interpretive Facilitator’s Toolkit webpage](#)
- [Co-creation Techniques for Reflection and Expression](#) – IDP Handout
- [Embrace Controversy, Avoid Conflict](#) – IDP Handout
- [Facilitating Reflection – A Manual for Leaders and Educators](#), Julie Reed & Christopher Koliba, John Dewey Project for Progressive Education
- [Be Relevant or Become a Relic: Meeting the Public Where They Are](#) by David Larsen, from the George Wright Society Proceedings, April 19, 2001
- [Foundations of Interpretation](#) – a free online tutorial developed by the NPS Interpretive Development Program in partnership with the Eppley Institute for Public Lands, 2003
- [Tenement Museum Training Manual](#), explains basics of facilitated dialogue as taught at one of the first museums to embrace and teach this method of audience engagement
- [How to Craft Questions](#), handout from [conversationcafe.org](http://conversationcafe.org)