

**Session Title:** Best practices in Docent/Interpreter Presentations

**Moderator:** Carrie McDougall

**Note taker:** Lexie Brown

**Participants:** Heather Barnes – Chicago Museum of Science and Industry

Steve Bishop – Whitaker Science Center

Shawn Rowe – Hatfield Marine Science Center (OSU)

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#### General Notes:

- Heather Barnes
  - Museum uses support screens to complement sphere – able to access internet and display current data, etc.
  - Use iClickers to engage audience and gauge response to tailor presentations on the fly
    - Use outlines instead of scripts, lots of Q &A during show
    - Also use support screens to reinforce learning and give positive reinforcement to participation
    - iClicker data can be displayed on support screens
  - Focus mostly on climate change, but also show solar system, space shuttle launch, etc.
- Steve Bishop
  - Synergy of science and the performing arts
  - Employs a troupe of professional actors to demonstrate live experiments and do live science theater (some associated with SOS)
  - Produced two scripts (same science content) for same program (*Storm Chef*)
    - 1 – lecture style
    - 2 – no-holds barred theater program
    - Audience evaluation throughout both versions of the program
      - Anecdotally – more engaged by theater-style program
- Shawn Rowe
  - Hatfield Marine Science Center – small aquarium and science center
    - Conduct research on learning using their exhibits and programs
    - Shawn is representing Celeste Barthel (sp?), who has been doing research on staff and volunteer training
  - Past emphasis: creating better exhibits

- Newer emphasis: helping interpreters (staff) to be good facilitators with exhibits
  - Docents and staff are integral to interpreting SOS and Magic Planet, especially when interactivity isn't high
  - Training about learning theory, how different groups learn, how to make programs more inquiry-based
  - Have trained volunteers and staff and then observed how their programs and their self-efficacy have changed
- Encourage professional development to be thought of not as training (one-off experiences or new content) but as lifelong learning to help staff develop interest in content to promote that lifelong learning
  - Important to connect staff and volunteers to scientists, helps them care about the content
- Questions:
  - *(For Steve)* Will evaluations include both how audience was engaged and effectiveness in learning?
    - Steve: Yes. Evaluation will be available on SOS website.
  - *(For Shawn)* Do you have any of your research published?
    - Shawn: Not on professional development yet, but hopefully in March/April.
    - Shawn: We can share knowledge now via email.
    - We are doing some programming and publishing around docent programming with COSEE and will be available soon.
  - *(For Shawn)* How big of a test case do you need to try out research results (number of docents)?
    - Shawn: Number of docents is not as important as types of docents.
    - Shawn: Involves pre-interview and post-interview. We would send someone up to your institution, may need to jointly fund (between CA Sea Grant and institution).
  - *(For Heather)* How do you do interactivity on the fly?
    - Heather: Created a series of playlists (shows) that are used repeatedly (basic storyline remains the same), but facilitators are positioned to talk about current information (i.e. space shuttle launch).
    - Heather: In each case, we have a series of images on the sphere. What the docent says/does with the playlist differs.
    - 2008 workshop notes have information on Cestron (sp?) program used at MSI.
  - *(For Heather)* Can you share your playlist and questions that you ask?
    - Heather: Yes. Keep in mind that a lot depends on facilitator and what they are interested in.
    - Heather: Organizational change was necessary to hire more educators, improvisers, scientists, etc. (people higher skill sets and that are familiar with research) instead of more traditional, greeter-type volunteers.
      - Could be done with volunteers as well.
  - Maurice Henderson: *(To Shawn)* Are there specific instances of content that you found most useful to interpreters?

- Shawn: Not really, but if staff and volunteers don't understand datasets, they won't be able to interpret them. They need to interact with scientists and data should be accessible to volunteers and staff.
- Steve: SOS doesn't play direct role in Storm Chef, but use pre-established datasets to have audience look at them and figure out what they mean.
- Heather: Needed to break down science between CO2 and greenhouse gas emissions.
  - Used predictive model, made sure their team thoroughly understood datasets before implementing it.

**Recommendations to NOAA (Office of Education, Earth System Research Laboratory, National Visualization Laboratory):**

**Actions/Next Steps:**

<i>Action/Next Step</i>	<i>Responsible Network Member/Institution</i>

**Research Questions for Further Exploration:**

- How docent-led programming improves with new training based on emphasis on becoming familiar with data and encouraging lifelong learning (Shawn Rowe at Hatfield Marine Science Center)